Interview with Cecil B. Lyon

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR CECIL B. LYON

Interviewed by: John Bovey

Initial interview date: October 26, 1988

John Bovey, a retired Foreign Service Officer, interviewing Ambassador Cecil Lyon for the Senior Officer Project on October 26th at his house in Hancock, New Hampshire regarding his career in the Foreign Service with special emphasis on the European experience.

Q: Do you want to say a little word about when you went into the Foreign Service and why, and how you got involved in foreign affairs?

LYON: First of all I'd like to say John what a pleasure it is to have you here. Its always nice to see Foreign Service officers. Its even nicer to see ones with whom one has worked and whom one enjoys being with and whom one admires.

Yes, people often ask me about why I went in the Foreign Service. I think it was a mixed bag. I think in the first place when I should have been reading The Rover Boys, I was reading E. Phillips Oppenheim, where the young junior secretary would always be lunching with the glamorous spy in the Ritz bar somewhere. I think also—it may sound corny today but I had a desire to serve my country. And finally, I think it was a yearning to travel, to see the world, to go to far places, to have some experience and a life which would broaden one with some adventure in it. I must say I was looking for that. I had an English father and he did everything he could to dissuade me from going into the Foreign Service. We didn't

have much money and he said in the British Foreign Service you had to have a private income—”which you won't have”, he told me. So I took the course of least resistance and I roomed with a fellow called Cassat in college and his father had a brokerage firm, and I went into that and spent three miserable years in Wall Street. The day of the big crash in 1929 I went into the toilet at that office and the senior New York partner came in and he said, “Cecil, this is a hell of a business. I've been in it 20 years and I've just lost everything I have.” So that made me decide that I was going to go into the Foreign Service.

Q: You're like me then, you did have a reaction from a previous job. I went in after being a teacher, then teaching at Annapolis until I was sick of it.

LYON: Well, yes, of course I did and Daddy said at that point, “Well, I can't help you any more.” Then he came down to stay with me in Cuba, which was my first post, and I heard him saying to people, “I've always encouraged my boys to do exactly what they want. When Cecil wanted to go in the Foreign Service I gave him every encouragement.” To myself I said, “The hell you did.” But anyway I think he believed it, and I must say, having made that decision to leave Wall Street and get in the Foreign Service, I lived happily ever afterwards.

Q: Do you have any remarks that you'd like to make about the way in which promotions were handled in those days as compared to nowadays? What was the system of promotion?

LYON: Well, I'm not sure what the system is nowadays but in the old days you'll remember every year there'd be a Board made up primarily of Foreign Service Officers—I served on at least one, I think maybe two, myself. Every Chief of Mission had written an efficiency report about all of his staff in which he was urged to be totally frank. We, on the Boards worked hours reading all these reports and I think it was pretty fair. I'm not sure what the present system is of course. I suppose all of us—I know I did, I don't know whether you did—but I went through some periods when there seemed to be rather long stretches during

which I wasn't promoted, and that naturally made one feel sort of depressed. But I think on the whole it was fair. Oh, and I should add, of course, that about every three years an Inspector would come from the State Department and he would go over, not only the administration of the office, but he would write efficiency reports about each officer. So you had a mass of material about every officer. I always had an awful time writing efficiency reports about my juniors because I didn't like to say anything unpleasant about them, which was not the way it should be. On the other hand, when I was on the Board I read some efficiency reports which I thought were much too harsh on the junior people, but perhaps over the years these things average out. I think also—I know one officer who shall be nameless—but he had two very tough chiefs as Ambassadors and he feels that they sort of ended his career. He was a brilliant man but he did not reach the thing we all aim for, of course, the top post—I mean Ambassador—so he finally resigned in desperation. And I think that could happen but I think that is more the rare case.

Q: Was there any feeling at that time, as there is now, of terrible discontent with the way things go at the last hurdle—at the top? Or was the problem less?

LYON: I think there has always been discontent.

Q: No, I mean appointments from outside the Service.

LYON: I think that we all knew, or at least we should have known, that there was feeling against non-career people—political appointments as we used to call them. There has always been that feeling amongst members of the Service. But dammit, we knew that when we went in. I was quite conscious of that. It didn't worry me too much. I thought that some of the non-career Ambassadors were absolutely marvelous. You couldn't have had a better man than David Bruce. Of course, originally he'd been in the service but only for a very few years. And there was Harriman, and Bunker, and people like that. I was almost an expert on political appointees. I had Bowers in Chile, I had Houghton and Gavin in

Paris and all of them would come in at first with a feeling that all this darn Foreign Service was a lot of stuffy people.

Q: They felt they had fallen into a nest of vipers.

LYON: Yes, but I've never known one, who after about a year or so, didn't feel that the career people were pretty good, and there were pretty good people, and we had a fine corps—devoted, honest. I really don't know enough about it now. I do know that I have a nephew, who shall be nameless, but he's reached the top, he's already been an Ambassador to one country and now there seems to be nothing for him. I think its a pity because I know he's—you know him—and he's a very bright fellow. I think maybe it's worse now, but this kind of situation has always been bad.

Q: That's very interesting. So there really is nothing new except the dimensions of the problem.

LYON: Nothing new, it may be a little worse but I hope it will swing back.

Q: Okay. Do you want to talk about Cuba a little bit? When you went to Cuba—well, of course, it was your first post—but did you sense any time there that things were not on a very solid foundation and that there would be plenty of trouble in the future?

LYON: Of course I did, and my father some years later, when all the troubles arose in Cuba, got out a letter which I'd written to him—rather unlike me because in those days I was not too serious, I enjoyed life, I wasn't too worried about the problems of the world or the downtrodden—but I'd written Daddy that Cuba was an extraordinary place; it was a beautiful place, but that the rich people weren't terribly interested in their own country; that the moment they'd make some money which they did, of course, when sugar was high, they'd dash off to Paris which was to them their spiritual home. And I felt there were far too many poor and the differences were too great. While I was there, a revolution broke out, led by former President—I want to say Monocal but that isn't quite right, I'll give

you that correct name later—and the militants got nearer and nearer to Havana; a lot of students got involved in it and they were causing riots and troubles. Tom Crane, who was a fellow Vice Consul, and I got in our car and tried to go out and see the fighting, which was a foolish thing to do of course, but we were young and full of adventure. We didn't get very far, we were turned back. Then the government troops captured the leaders of this revolution and they marched them into Havana, rather like Roman prisoners, through the streets chained together. It was really rather sad to see.

Yes, you could feel that things were stirring and that things weren't right. Of course I wasn't intelligent enough or farseeing enough to see how far it would go.

Q: I hadn't realized there was trouble as early as that. What happened to the revolution?

LYON: Of course it was suppressed. The government got control, as I say, they captured the leaders and paraded them through the streets.

I had a funny job, I mean unusual, it was my first post and so I was thrilled with everything. The first night there I was staying at a place called the Ingleterra, a big hotel in Havana, and my Spanish was distinctly lacking, so when the menu was handed to me I closed my eyes and I pointed my finger to the menu and I ordered what my finger hit. It turned out to be sea squid. I almost felt ill, and I remember how gloomy I felt that first night. It all seemed so marvelous when I got as a Christmas present the announcement that I was being made Vice Consul in Havana. I got the notice the 24th of December. But then I seemed far away from home and I sort of said to myself, “Why have I got into this? Why did I leave all the things I know and like?” And then I walked out, because I couldn't eat the squid; I walked out into the street and people were happy in those days, and they were singing, and the stars were out, and I was immediately lifted up and I felt like a million dollars. I had a boss called Consul General F.T. Frelinghuysen Dumont, and he was quite a martinet, and the Ambassador then was a man called Guggenheim. Harry Guggenheim was the one who helped finance Lindbergh. And he'd married a Mrs. Potter from New York

and I knew Mrs. Potter's two daughters, I used to go dancing with them in New York. They very frequently invited me to the Embassy, quite naturally because we were all friends. Dumont didn't like it. He said, “You're sucking up to the Embassy. I don't want any of my staff to be chasing after the Embassy.” So I had my problems.

Q: No Vice Consuls in my house!

LYON: No Vice Consuls in the Embassy. But anyway I was doing consular work—I don't know whether you want me to go into a little bit of this? Visas and...oh, I had one lovely experience. I was sitting at my desk one day, and a most ravishingly beautiful young lady was shown in. Her name was Blanche Satchel. She was English—no, she was Australian, and she'd gone to New York on a temporary visitor's visa which allowed her to stay six months and she'd been there two years acting in the Ziegfeld Follies and she came to Cuba on a visit—on a tour—and then of course didn't have any visa to go back. So I explained to her that we couldn't possibly give her another visitor's visa because she had abused that, or rather overstayed her last stay. But I did say I'd try and get her an immigration visa. So we telegraphed Australia. No, the quota was full. And finally I went in to Mr. Dumont and I said, “What can I do about this beautiful creature.” And he said, “Lyon, just 'cause a pretty girl looks at you, don't all go to pieces.” And I said, “Will you talk to her, sir?” He said, “Certainly. Bring her in.” So we went in and he said, “I hear you're having trouble with your visa.” “Yes, yes sir, I am. Jimmy Walker didn't know I couldn't do this. How was I supposed to know?” Dumont said, “Aha, well Lyon tells me he has done all he can for you. I don't know, we'll have to see about this.” And he said, “Lyon, give her a visa.” He too immediately wilted in her hands. And he said, “Give her a temporary visa anyhow. I know about it, so give it to her.” So I gave it to her. She went off and to my horror 60 days later I got a telegram saying, “Dear Mr. Lyon. You were so kind to me last time I'm coming back tomorrow to get another visa.” And for my sins she came back and I have to confess I gave her another.

I'd like to add, John, a little bit about the troubles that President Machado was having. They were primarily financial as is usually the case. I think Cuba had in its till about $140,000 which seems very little nowadays, and the government expenses were $600,000 due at the end of the month. They also had a $20 million debt to, I think it was either the National City Bank or some other bank, coming due at the end of the month. So the students took things into their own hands as they tend to do in Latin American countries—it was former President Menocal who headed the insurgency—but they were put down by the government.

One other memory of Cuba was my friendship with George Andrews, who, you remember, was in the Foreign Service and he was there with me. He was a very fervid fisherman and I liked him very much, and I'm not a fisherman, but to please him I used to go fishing with him. It would mean going down and staying in a wretched little town overnight, drinking quantities of rum, and going out in a boat and sweltering all day in the sun. But I did it because I liked George. He later turned up and succeeded me in Tokyo when I left there to go to Peking.

Q: Anything else, go ahead.

LYON: No, I don't think so. Most are stories and odds and ends.

Q: Now what about Hong Kong? Can you describe your duties in Hong Kong as a Vice Consul? It must have been very special.

LYON: I loved Hong Kong. Before going to Hong Kong, of course, I went back to the Department where they had what they called a training course for the junior Foreign Service Officers. It was run by Mr. Homer Byington, who was head of Personnel. And there was a wonderful lady there called Cornelia Bassell who was like the mother hen with all the little chicks. She would tell the wives of the young innocent Foreign Service Officers what they should do, how they should comport themselves, and we all adored her. And

then as we went out to posts we used to correspond with her and, like a Mother Superior, she kept taking care of us. When the final day came at that school to announce where we were all going, it was announced that I was to go as Vice Consul at Hong Kong; I have to confess that I was so ignorant: I knew that Hong Kong was somewhere in the Far East but I wasn't at all sure where. I went and looked it up on the map.

It was a very, very happy two years in Hong Kong. I was Vice Consul, which Norman Armour described as the lowest moving form of diplomatic life. I had shipping problems to handle and then later visa problems—immigration. That was a rather trying thing because it was very disillusioning. So many of these Chinese who had waited years and years for a visa to go to the United States would then be given a medical examination and very frequently it would be discovered that they had trachoma. You're not allowed to come to the United States with trachoma; its forbidden under the Immigration Act, and they'd be turned down which made for a great deal of misery.

I had a Chinese boy (we all had “boys”, in other words servants, and they were very attentive, they took care of you very well and I had one that was very good). One day he came in and he said his eyes itched terribly. And I said, “Oh, you must see a doctor right away” because I was scared he might have trachoma. Sure enough, he did, and that scared the living daylights out of me because I thought he would be touching things and then I'd touch them, and I'd get the darn thing. I said, “You'd better go to the hospital right away.” He said he'd get Flena to work for me, and I said, “Yes, but where will 'Flena' live because you have one room with your wife, the amah.” He said, “Oh, I get 'Flena'. He move in with amah.” And 'Flena' apparently moved in and it worked perfectly all right. Then after he got cured, my eyes started to itch and so I went to see this fellow—Dr. Chen I think was his name—who would tell us that these people had trachoma. I went to him and he said, “Oh, yes, you have trachoma.” And I heaved a sign because you can go blind with it. He said he could fix it, though. So he put some silver nitrate in my eyes, and I thought that he was playing a dirty trick on me because it just felt like fire. My eyes hurt so, I couldn't see, I gushed tears but eventually my eyes turned out to be all right, and

he said I was cured. I came home a few years later and went to my own doctor, and he looked at my eyes and said, “You couldn't possibly have had trachoma. It would have left scar tissues and you have none.” I think the Chinese doctor was just getting even with me because we had to turn down so many people who had trachoma.

What else? You asked me about the work in Hong Kong.

Q: Yes. I mean it was such a special place, the British tone of things and relations with the Chinese and so on. Your consular work must have been rather different from work in other posts.

LYON: I'm sure it was, and as you say, its a very special place and it was a wonderful place for a young man, particularly one who liked golf and riding and tennis. I felt I was being very Edwardian. Of course, there were very sad things about it. You know its the second most beautiful harbor in the world, I guess Sydney is considered...or Rio. Sydney and Rio and Hong Kong are three of the most beautiful harbors in the world.

Q: And Hong Kong has the world's hairiest airport, I'm told.

LYON: ...it is. Kai Tak, I think its called. But the sad part about it is that after you get out of the quarter where the British lived—they mostly lived up on The Peak—which was a mountain rising on the island—and you walk into the Chinese part of the town, things were very different. There used to be people who lived on sampans; they were equivalent of shacks on the water. When a big ocean liner would come in the women would paddle out and as garbage was thrown overboard they'd scoop it up and they lived on that, which upset you a bit. One of these women, I remember distinctly, got put in prison for something she'd done and she was in prison about a week and gained about 15 pounds because the prison food was so much better than the food she was used to eating. So that was an unpleasant side of it.

One amusing feature about it was that if you lived on the mainland—the New Territories they called it—and you were going to dinner on The Peak where the Taipans, the British business leaders lived—you had to take five modes of transportation. You'd take a little car or a taxi to the ferry, you'd take the ferry across the harbor, you'd get into a rickshaw to be taken to the tram which climbed up the side of The Peak, and at the top of The Peak you'd get out and be carried in a sedan chair. I've never known anywhere in the world where they had so many means of transportation to go out for one evening.

Q: Was there an influx of people coming from the Mainland?

LYON: You mean the refugees from the Mainland? No, that was much later; we had no refugee problems when I was there. Of course, as you know, since I've retired I've been involved with refugees, in my work with the International Rescue Committee, and so I had to go back to Hong Kong any number of times. It is still a fascinating place. Of course, the British would say it was the Crown Colony par excellence, with a Governor General, and they had the usual pomp and ceremony when members of royalty came. There were a lot of tourists coming through; a number of friends turned up. One incident I recall. There was a man on a world cruise, who died just before getting to Hong Kong and his wife had him cremated. And it was his wish that his ashes should be tossed on the Seven Seas. Well, when the boat set forth from Hong Kong to go to Manila she got up on the deck to scatter the ashes in the Seven Seas but she couldn't bear to open the little box so she threw the box containing his ashes over instead of just the ashes. And to my horror, one day a man came from Customs and said this little box had floated back to Hong Kong, and what would I do with it? Well, of course, I couldn't tell her so I had it buried in the local cemetery. I didn't carry out his wishes completely.

I'd like to tell you a little about my transfer from Hong Kong; that played an important part in my life.

Q: You mean when you went to Tokyo?

LYON: When I went to Tokyo. When I was in Washington the question came up that the State Department was going to be short $10,000 in its budget for that year. Imagine nowadays, $10,000—it seems like petty cash. Well anyway, to make this up, they were going to cut the four last Foreign Service Officers who were taken into the State Department because their salaries were $2,500 a year each. And I, unfortunately, was one of those four. Well, there was a very nice Assistant Secretary of State called Mr. Bill Castle. Mr. Grew was on his way from Turkey to Tokyo and he was looking for a private secretary, and Mr. Castle very kindly recommended that I get the job. Mr. Grew interviewed me, and I don't know to this day whether I failed or passed because he never told me. But in the meantime they found another way of finding $10,000 and I wasn't kicked out on my ear. When I went through Tokyo on my way to Hong Kong the ship stopped at Yokohama and I bumped into Elsie, who had come down to meet the two Roosevelt boys on their way to join their father, the Governor General of the Philippines. Elsie invited me to come back to the Embassy. Well, I must say even in Washington before leaving I'd met Elsie, and we'd become very good friends but it wasn't really romance at first sight, I've got to admit. I spent a very pleasant day with her and the Roosevelt boys, lunching at the Embassy with Ambassador and Mrs. Grew. But anyway when I went to Hong Kong I got a letter from her saying, “I'm sending you the watch which you left at the Embassy.” They had a swimming pool at the Embassy and we went swimming. Well, it wasn't my watch; it was the watch of one of the Roosevelt boys and I sent it on to him. And then Elsie and I became sort of pen pals and finally after about a year I said I was going on leave and I thought I'd come to Japan. And she wrote and invited me to come and stay. Things were beginning to churn and so I got on the boat —in those days you didn't have a plane—so I got on the boat and I got to Shanghai and George Allen, who was Vice Consul, came aboard and he handed me a telegram, and it said I was transferred as Third Secretary in Tokyo. I crunched it up and I said, “Its that fellow, Black.” Black was a practical joker in the Consulate General in Hong Kong, one of the Vice Consuls. I said, “I know the Consul General is away and he sent this telegram because he knows about Elsie and me.” So I threw it overboard. George said, “I don't

think, Cecil, you should do that; its real, I think." I said, "Well, let's send a telegram to the Department and find out if it is real." So we did but before an answer could come, I had to make up my mind whether to get on the boat going the other direction that evening. I did and I had three miserable days going back to Hong Kong because I was sure that when I got there I'd find that I'd had a trick played on me. But it turned out to be the real thing, so I went off to Tokyo.

Q: Well, I was wondering...when did you get there, '33?

LYON: I got there in May—on Memorial Day.

Q: Yes, '33. The war in China was not too far ahead though, was it?

LYON: I was in China when it started.

Q: Was there any feeling then, or any sort of fore-seeing of the terrible things that were to come, the mistakes of the Japanese and so on?

LYON: That's a very difficult question. I don't think we were yet conscious of much. As I mentioned, I was Third Secretary. I felt I was in heaven: wonderful post, marvelous chief, Mr. Grew, and the lovely country—I loved Japan. My work was doing the weekly political report, and also I was assigned to do despatches on the sale of the Chinese-Eastern Railway, I think it was called. The Japanese were buying from the Russians, the last link of the Trans-Siberian which came from Harbin to Dairen. That went on for some time and I covered that with Geoffrey Parsons, who was Mr. Grew's private secretary. He had the job that I might have had, and we often wondered whether, if I had got the job, I ever would have dared to have the courage to ask to marry Elsie. I'm afraid I wouldn't have had, because I would not have been earning enough even on my munificent $2500 a year.

In that connection I think it might be interesting to know something about the personal life of old Foreign Service Officers. I hadn't been in Japan more than a month and on July 3rd

I went, terrified, into Mr. Grew's study and asked if I might marry his daughter. And he said, “Oh, and what is your situation?” So I drew myself up and I said, “Sir, I'm a Foreign Service Officer, Class 8 unclassified C.” He said, “What on earth does that mean? What do you earn? What are your prospects?” I said, “$2500 a year.” And he sort of moaned and said, “What other prospects have you?” I said, “When my father dies I'll get half of a very small trust fund.” And he said, “Well then, I'll have to talk to my wife.” And he went and talked to his wife and thank goodness she was on my side so Elsie and I got married.

But getting back to the more serious side...

Q: Yes. Let me interrupt you there just a minute. My recollection of this period is very dim. Weren't the Japanese already all over Korea—weren't they occupying Korea still at this time?

LYON: I believe that was later. That was after I left Japan.

Q: I thought that was before the invasion of China.

LYON: You're right about that, but I'm a little bit hazy regarding dates at my advanced age.

Q: I've been very interested recently to read about the sort of mystery that still surrounds the Emperor during the ordeal of his illness that's going on now, and the attitude of the Japanese. It's really a mystical sort of thing.

LYON: Yes, he's the descendant of the Sun God.

Q: Yes. What was the feeling toward the Emperor then?

LYON: Oh, utter reverence and devotion.

Q: It's the same man, isn't it? It's the same guy, isn't it?

LYON: It's the same guy and over here, I will show you what Elsie and I were given as a wedding present by Hirohito—this lacquer box. It has the imperial chrysanthemum on it, and his mother the Empress Dowager gave us the silver vase in the other room which I'll show you. It has two lions on the side of it and neither of us have ever known whether she did it because we were called Lyon, or it was just an accident. No, there was tremendous reverence for him and for all the members of the royal family and really Japan was almost a fairy tale country when we were there. The women and men all wore kimonos; the women wore beautiful kimonos; now they're all in western clothes. The country, as you know, is absolutely beautiful. You've been there, haven't you?

Q: Never, no.

LYON: It's absolutely beautiful, now its terribly crowded, but then all cities are. We had a very astute Counselor called Eddie Neville—we didn't have a minister then—who had lived in Japan many years and he and his wife were very much on top of things. Mr. Grew had very good relations with all the Japanese, and so did Mrs. Grew. They liked Japan. Mrs. Grew, of course, was a collateral descendant of Commodore Perry, so that went down well. And really things ran along very smoothly as far as the Embassy was concerned. I think it was the premier Embassy in Tokyo in those days. The Japanese were easy to get to know, which may surprise you. Elsie had lots of young Japanese friends. When I came upon the scene she'd already been there a year and we used to go off skiing with them, and one would stay in little inns heated only by a hibachi. I remember there was one couple we used to go with frequently and all four of us would sleep on the floor in the little room in the inn with the hibachi at our feet and our bodies stretched out like the arms of a clock—at 12:00, 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00. A lot of people found the Japanese standoffish. I never did.

Q: Did these people...were they speaking English? Did you have to learn Japanese?

LYON: As you know, John, I'm not a good linguist. Elsie is an excellent linguist but even she had trouble with Japanese. Elsie speaks fluent French, fluent German, fair Italian and fluent Spanish. When we were in Peking she learned Chinese, but she had trouble with Japanese. It was rather funny when we were in Peking, we were assigned to Santiago, and I said, “Well, that's one place where I shall be ahead of you because I speak Spanish.” Not good Spanish, needless to say. We got there and we hadn't been there a month when Chileans would say to me, “But how is it you don't speak better Spanish? Your wife speaks such good Spanish.” She'd learned it in a month.

Q: Yes, that's surprising. I didn't think the Japanese...that you would hear that much English among the Japanese at that period. Nowadays of course...

LYON: Well, of course, let's face it. In those days we were seeing the government people and the upper crust, if I may use that horrible word; but, even as I remember, Japanese servants seemed to speak some English—I don't know why, but they did.

Q: And you found them quite easy to get to know?

LYON: I found them easy to know.

Q: I've never had much experience with them. The ones that I've met in different posts I always felt that I got to a certain level, and then there was a whole basement underneath that I just couldn't get into at all.

LYON: Well I think the reason I found it easy—I think Elsie had broken the ice, and she had all these Japanese girlfriends and then they had husbands and it made it all very easy. And in that connection, John, I think I'll mention something that I have often wondered about. I've often wondered why the administration of the Foreign Service doesn't take advantage of things like this in the appointment of personnel. I've always thought that after the war when things were so difficult with Japan, it would have been very wise to send Elsie and me back to Tokyo where we could have picked up old friendships

and perhaps been helpful. The same thing with Turkey where Elsie and her family were for so many years. They did send us back to Chile where we'd been before, but I think Personnel could be more astute in selection of posts for people. I think mostly it is a matter, or was in my days, the old days, of someone in the Department who is looking for an officer to fill a certain spot and happens to know you and your abilities to say, “Oh, Cecil knows how to do this, he knows how this works, we'll send him.” I personally never wanted to concentrate, I never wanted to be an expert in one country, or a specialist, because I wanted to see the world and I certainly did.

Q: Well, you did, of course, go to Chile twice.

LYON: Yes, and I wasn't too happy about that.

Q: Don't you find that it's difficult to revisit? I've been stationed twice in Holland, and although the second visit was all right I was a little stale on the whole enterprise.

LYON: Yes, I think so, but I was just thinking of Japan where things were so difficult it might have been of some use. I didn't want to ever go back a second time—although this contradicts what I'm saying about the wisdom of sending people back. As to Chile, of course, when they make you an Ambassador, you certainly don't want to say, “No, I don't want to go because I've already been there.” But I did find it difficult because when I got there—we'd been there earlier as a Third Secretary, and Chile is a small country; you know everybody and all the people that are in government are your friends, so 15 years later they think, “Ah, local boy makes good. He'll get us aid, he'll get us all the aid we want, we'll just turn to him, and things will come flowing.” And, of course, it doesn't and you can't do that. So it's got advantages and disadvantages.

You asked about the Emperor. When I went to Japan I had with me a little cocker spaniel puppy and I'd already become engaged to Elsie at this point, and was invited up to Kara, where the Grews were spending the summer. And I said, “I'm bringing Sambo,” that was the name of my little puppy. And word came back, “Mrs. Grew says not to bring Sambo.

You've got to choose between Elsie and Sambo." So I said, "I choose Sambo." So I went up to Karuizawa and I got out of the car at the Grews' house and Sambo jumped out of the car, ran upstairs, and jumped on my mother-in-law-to-be's bed. And I never got him back, she was so intrigued by him.

Just as we were leaving Japan, Elsie and her father were walking along the moat that surrounds the imperial palace and they had Sambo with them. Sambo fell in the moat, and Mr. Grew was terribly upset. Just then a taxi came along and the taxi driver climbed down inside the moat, rescued Sambo, and then disappeared—they didn't get his name. So they sent out word trying to find the name of the taxi driver and something came out in the paper about it. And a few days later Mr. Grew went to the New Year's reception at the palace and the Emperor looked at him and said, "How is Sambo?" It was a human touch, I think, from the descendant of the Sun God. His brother and sister-in-law, Prince and Princess Chichibu, came to our wedding and it was rather amusing because Elsie and I were standing in the receiving line and suddenly they appeared and everybody deserted us and ran to see the Chichibus and Elsie and I were left ten minutes alone at our own wedding reception, which was rather fun. And then we had to ask permission to leave because we couldn't leave before the royalty left. So we asked permission, and we were allowed to go and set off on our honeymoon. The honeymoon was amusing also because I hadn't been at the post six months and I wasn't due for leave for six months but Mr. Grew looked up in the regulations and it said, "In the case of emergency you may grant two weeks leave." He said, "This is certainly an emergency."

Okay, that will close Japan, I think.

Q: So then after Tokyo you went to Peking in 1934, I think?

LYON: That's right. Of course I realized we'd have to go, sad as I felt about it, because I'd broken the unwritten law of marrying my chief's daughter, and as you know, you're not allowed in our Service to serve with any member of your family—which I think is quite just.

However, anybody who knew Mr. Grew would have known that he would have bent over backward to avoid showing any favoritism, but, on the other hand, his wife would have had Elsie around all the time which probably would have annoyed the other members of the staff. So we set forth in January on the Nanrei Maru. That year they had about the worst storms they'd ever had in the China Sea and the moment we got aboard Elsie collapsed in her bunk—she is not a very good sailor. I didn't dare tell her that for two days our rudder had been broken, and for about a day our radio had been out of whack so we weren't able to communicate with anyone. Finally we arrived at Taku Bar which was all frozen in and we went crashing through the ice and finally got to the railway station at 2:00 a.m. in the morning and got on the train about an hour later for Peking. On that trip our suitcases were rifled, so all in all we had rather a pleasant journey from Japan to China.

Q: How long did it take?

LYON: It took about three days on the boat—three or four days—and then about six hours from Taku Bar to Peking. We were met at the station in Peking by some members of the staff plus the Ting-chi, a marvelous fellow who practically ran the Embassy. He was at our beck and call for the next four years and he made our life very much more pleasant. Nelson Johnson was the Minister, we didn't have an Ambassador then, but the Johnsons very kindly took us in and we stayed with them until we moved into a rather lovely house in the San Kwan Miaou compound.

San Kwan Miaou used to be, before the Boxer Rebellion, a temple. The student mess where the Foreign Service Officers studying Chinese in the service lived was part of it. It had a little swimming pool, and also three houses where secretaries lived. It was really a delightful place and we took over from Bob Buell, whom I was succeeding, his very nice house and quite a number of his servants; in fact I don't think any young couple nowadays would end up by having about ten servants as we did on my munificent salary. You had to have a special amah for each child, you had to have a special maffo, or groom, for each

pony and I played polo so I had about four ponies. But enough of the easy life. Do you want to ask me something more?

Q: Yes. When did the Japanese hit China then? Was it a year after you got there?

LYON: They were up in Manchuria then and they worked their way down. Then there was the Marco Polo bridge incident which I think was about '34 or '35, I'm a bit vague on dates.

Q: But you were there then?

LYON: I was there then and I was there when the Japanese captured Peking. Elsie was at the seashore, Ching Wang Tao, which is about overnight from Peking and I remember going to bed reading Gone With the Wind to the boom-boom-boom of the Japanese approaching Peking. Suddenly I woke up because of the silence—I was so used to the guns—and I wondered what had happened. I slipped on some clothes and got in my car and I drove all around the outskirts of the city and found that during the night the Chinese had slipped away towards the south and the Japanese were just about to march in and take Peking.

Q: You mean the capital was evacuated in effect by the government?

LYON: Well the troops evacuated. The capital had already moved to Nanking.

Q: Oh, even before the Japanese came in.

LYON: The government offices in Peking had already moved to Nanking. Second Minister Johnson used to go down there on business from time to time though we kept the office in Peking and Minister Johnson spent most of his time in Peking.

I had a very funny experience because I was captain of the polo team and we used to play polo, we foreigners, mostly diplomats and the Marine Corps officers. We had a Marine detachment which was the Marine Guard, and they had a mounted squadron or whatever

you call it—platoon, I guess—and you remember “Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines.” Well anyway, we used to play polo on the Glac's, which is an open space which surrounds the city walls. I believe the city walls now have all been torn down, but in our day there was a wall all around the Legation Quarter. We used to play out there, and all the Chinese used to stop as they went along the street, which bordered the polo field, and watch us. The great question was whether we would play polo the day the Japanese marched in to take Peking, and we decided that if we didn't the Chinese would think that if the foreigners are scared things must be very bad. We thought that would stir them up and worry them, so we decided it would have a calming effect if we went and played polo the day the Japanese marched in. And we did and, of course, we were criticized for being heartless, not worried about the poor Chinese. But actually we had considered it very carefully. Perhaps we made the wrong decision, I don't know, but looking back on it I don't think so.

Q: That's curious. It reminds me of the occupation of Paris. Was there collaboration going on between Chinese and Japanese or whoever was left there? How did it affect life?

LYON: Actually it really didn't affect life much at all, strangely enough, particularly for the foreigners. I think the Japanese in north China were not very hard on the Chinese. Later on as they went south in Shanghai I think they got very ferocious, but in Peking we really seemed hardly conscious of it. We westerners went about our normal life. People gave parties; some of the Chinese didn't come to our parties because they were nervous with the Japanese around. We used to spend much time out in the Western Hills which was about an hour's drive from Peking beyond the Summer Palace. The foreigners used to rent sections of monasteries and temples where they'd go for weekends. That had to be stopped because the Japanese didn't like us wandering around there, but otherwise there wasn't a great deal of change. Of course, as I say, the government was out and the Japanese were being rather careful, I think, not to do too many things that would get reported by the foreign Legations in Peking. The mass of Chinese people in Peking and its surroundings carried on just as before the occupation.

Q: But then there was no real underground resistance?

LYON: Not a thing. The Chinese were used to having invasions from Mongolia. I remember a fellow called Dr. Hu Shih who was quite an intelligent Chinese. I think he later came to this country to teach at some university. He said to me, “Oh, a hundred years from now this won't matter, this will all be forgotten, we will have absorbed the invaders.” And I thought, “My goodness! To be able to think a hundred years ahead.” Its what you hear about the Chinese and its what you expect them to do, but usually they're much more realistic than that. We always hear about the inscrutable Chinese...

Q: But I would say Dr. Hu Shih was quite realistic in the light of what's going on now, yes. Anyway, go ahead.

LYON: I was going to say, you think about the inscrutable Chinese who never shows his emotions. We had a dog, Kim, an Alsatian, which we'd brought to China with us and we had a coolie who absolutely adored him. He used to groom him and take care of him, and one day he came rushing in—Elsie had gone to Japan to have our first child, Alice—and the coolie came in rushing, crying absolutely like a child, “Come quick master, Kim dying, Kim dying.” So he certainly showed his emotions, he was deep in tears over the death of a dog. When we were transferred to China, Elsie, who had been there on a visit a few months before, remembered this coolie who had been her rickshaw coolie during her visit. So we sent out and we got him and he became her personal rickshaw coolie. He was fleet of foot, and he always got everywhere ahead of everybody else. He was a marvelous man.

We also had a little Chevrolet convertible, which came with Elsie too. The coolie used to polish it and keep it all shiny and whenever we'd go to a party, to the movies or anything like that, where we had to park the car out in the street—we'd take him with us so he would prevent people from stealing the hubcaps and all that sort of thing. It was very funny because as I was trying to park, he'd say, “More backside master, more backside, stop it.” Well anyway he fell in love with this little Chevrolet and so I said, “Oung-Pu, I'm going to

make you a chauffeur.” So I'd take him down to the polo field and try to teach him to drive and having pulled a rickshaw all your life, it was as if you'd been a lowly runner in Wall Street and were suddenly made a partner in Morgan's because it was such an exalted position. But he crashed through the garage door, he did everything wrong and he couldn't learn and finally I hired a man to teach him. And one day he came to me crying and said, “Master, I no want to be chauffeur. I think motor car all time. I can't sleep master. I don't want to.” And I said, “Pu, you have to.” And so he stuck to it. Eventually he got his license after about three tries, and then he was the proudest man in Peking. One day I was driving back from the country, I'd been out hunting, and just making conversation I said, “Pu, how old are you?” “Thirty year, master.” “Are you married?” “No, master.” I said, “What? Thirty years old and not married?” which was very unusual for a Chinese. He said, “No master, I no find any girl she like me—no find any girl I like.” He evidently thought about this and thought that I was displeased because he wasn't married. He came to me about six weeks later and said, “Master, I find one girl she crazy about me so I'm going to marry him. You borrow me fifty dollars and I'll marry him.” So I “borrowed” him fifty dollars and probably ruined his life.

Q: Times have changed haven't they? I was going to ask you, the Legations were all in one quarter. So you really had your own forbidden city there?

LYON: We had our own forbidden city because you see after the Boxer Rebellion when the foreign diplomats were caught there in the trouble, the allies demanded a special quarter. It had a wall all around it, and the Embassies all had guards; as I mentioned we had a Marine Guard, the British had a guard, the Italians had a guard and the French had a guard. It was really rather confining.

Q: Where was Chiang Kai-shek at this point? Was he unknown, or was he...

LYON: Oh, no. He was already in Nanking.

Q: Oh, he was?

LYON: He was president and Madame Chiang Kai-shek...

Q: He was already president?

LYON: He was already president then and she came up to Peking a few times. She was always—I mean the Chinese ladies used to wear dresses with slits way up the side which were rather revealing and rather attractive. Madame Chiang Kai-shek decided that they had to close those slits because she was very puritanical. I guess from her American education, because she was educated in American schools, if I remember correctly.

Q: That reminds me of Madame de Gaulle. Do you remember that look that used to come over her face when any woman's gown was a little bit too decollete? Well then, what happened finally? The Japanese, they just stayed there in Peking and meanwhile all hell was breaking loose down south.

LYON: They were also still in Peking when we left.

Q: Well, Chiang had to move out of Nanking too at some point, didn't he, or was that much later?

LYON: Well later on he went, of course as you know, to the island, Taipei.

Q: No, no, I know, but I thought the capital was moved again too wasn't it?

LYON: That's right, he moved to Chungking before Taipei, you're quite right.

Q: Well, anything else?

LYON: On China? Oh, there must have been a lot more on China. The change from Tokyo in the heart of a devoted family to Peking was rather hard on Elsie. She's a very sensitive

person and there was so much poverty in Peking that Elsie wanted to help everybody and I think by the time we left we had 104 people who were being supported by Elsie. Not out of my meager earnings but financed by her mother, who was equally kind-hearted and would send Elsie money. This had its sad effects on one occasion. There was a Russian family called Klemm; they were living in Peking—White Russians—and they had their son in Berlin and they were longing to join him, but we, of course, didn't have any money to send them there. Elsie appealed to her mother and her mother sent the money for the family to get to Berlin. They got to Berlin just about the time that the Russians got to Berlin, so we've never known what happened to them.

There was a White Russian who played polo with us. He was a horse trainer and he looked like a centaur when he played polo. When we were transferred to Chile he begged me to take him and his wife with us. Of course we couldn't afford to, and he said, “Then when you get to Chile will you try and find me a job there?” Well I did. I asked a lot of the rich Chileans who had big fundos—plantations—if they'd hire him and nobody would. So I must say I didn't pursue it too hard and I've regretted it until today, its on my conscience, because when the Japanese came into Peking he fled to Shanghai and then of course the Japanese got into Shanghai, nothing has ever been heard of him since.

Q: I haven't asked you anything about relations with the Soviet embassies or legations in Tokyo or in Peking. Yes, they were represented there, weren't they?

LYON: That's a good question but nothing comes to mind particularly.

Q: Wasn't there a Russian embassy in the compound there?

LYON: No, there wasn't and I can't think why. There was what used to be a Russian embassy which was occupied by the Austrians for some reason. Was it perhaps that China did not have relations with Russia?

Q: How about Tokyo?

LYON: Oh, yes, in Tokyo there were Russians. I mean there was a Soviet embassy and the various embassies had relations, never very cordial, stiff and perfectly correct.

Q: No, but there were no problems between the Soviets and the Japanese of the terrible kind they have now about the islands and Vladivostok and all that stuff?

LYON: I can't remember.

Q: Okay. Well should we move on to Chile?

LYON: Yes, let's move on to Chile.

Q: You were there from 1938 to 1943, right?

LYON: Oh, let me tell you one thing that I did while I was in Peking which might be interesting to other Foreign Service Officers. First of all, Jim Penfield, who I'm sure you know, was a language student when we were in Peking and we saw a lot of him. He also used to play polo. And after our second child Lilla was born in Peking, I went off to Yunanfou—its called something else now, Kunming, I believe, but anyway Jim had been made Consul there and I stayed with him a few days. It was my intention to go down and take the boat from the end of the railway to Yunanfou and then beat my way up the coast of China. There was one train a week and I was going on that. The day before I was to take it I got a telegram from Elsie, “Alice,” that was our eldest daughter, “has scarlet fever in the hospital, but don't come back.” Well, of course, I had to go back so I missed my train and my wonderful trip and I took an airplane. There was a flight to Lanchow but there was no flight from Lanchow to Peking for about a day or two days. So when I hopped off the plane I, like a very big-spender, said to the man, “What will it cost to hire a private plane to fly to Peking?” And he disappeared for about a half an hour and he came back and he said, “It will cost $3,470, but we have no plane.” He figured it all out but there was no plane. I was relieved because, needless to say, I didn't have the money. But anyway scarlet fever was a rather worrying thing in our family because Mr. Grew as a young boy

got scarlet fever and he'd been deaf the rest of his life from it. So I knew that Elsie was terribly worried and I went rushing back as fast as I could.

My job in Peking started out by doing claims. We had thousands of claims of Americans against the Chinese and all the new secretaries were always put to work on bringing them up to date and they never got brought up to date. And then I did the political reporting after that.

Q: Oh, I was going to say you were doing both consular and political?

LYON: Well, the consular work was not much. Concurrently, I was Consul in Tientsin, though I resided in Peking. That enabled people to get their passports and bring in income tax returns to be sworn to before the Consul, and documents to be authenticated—things like that.

Q: Before we leave this, how many American civilians were there at this point?

LYON: In Peking or in the Embassy?

Q: In the Peking area. You probably had missionaries...

LYON: We had about 150 Marines. Maybe 100 missionaries spread all over the place...

Q: You mean outside of the city?

LYON: Yes, and some right in the city too; there was a missionary college there. And then you had a number of—not expatriates—but Americans and Europeans who had small incomes and they could live better in Peking than anywhere else. They had lovely houses and they had lots of servants, all on very little money. So they were there. My father came to visit us once. I mentioned before, I think, that he was an Englishman, and there was a lady called Mrs. Calhoun, who was the widow of one of our first ministers—not first, but minister to Peking—and she found life so pleasant after he died that she stayed on in a

great house and entertained a great deal, and was sort of the hostess with the mostest on the ball in Peking. She was talking to Daddy one day and she said, “Oh, Mr. Lyon, how do you like Peking?” And Daddy said, “Well you know, I don't think I like it very much, I don't like the foreigners.” We never knew whether he meant the Chinese or the Americans or other expatriates who were living there.

Q: The big American colony, I guess, was in Shanghai?

LYON: Shanghai, that's right where there were many American businessmen.

Q: I think we had extraterritorial courts there until very late in the game.

LYON: Until the war with Japan.

Q: Did you ever know Judge Helmick?

LYON: Oh, of course, yes.

Q: He came out to liquidate the Consular courts in Morocco when I was there and I could see that for him Morocco was very small potatoes indeed beside Shanghai. He was a very nice man.

LYON: Yes, he was. One business that was in Peking owned by an American, probably you know it, many people do and it is called The Fette. They made Chinese rugs and exported them all over the world. They were modern Chinese rugs, they weren't like the nice old ones. We got a few of the nice old ones, which we still have worn to the threads somewhere, probably in your room or somewhere. All right I think that...

Q: Well, should we move on—first, let's see, '38 to '43 in Santiago. Yes, this was in the time of Secretary Hull, of course, wasn't it?

LYON: Yes.

Q: Well, tell me about Norman Armour, his influence there.

LYON: Oh, I can't say enough about him. It was one of the many nice things that happen in the Foreign Service. Norman Armour, before he got in the Foreign Service, was my father-in-law's private secretary, and he knew Elsie when she was a baby. And Elsie was off at Ching Wang Tao where we had taken a little cottage for the summer, with the children and nurses and whatnot, when I got word that we were being transferred to Santiago. We knew we were due to be transferred—we'd been in Peking five years—and she had said, “When you get word, tell me we're transferred and let me guess where we're going—give me some hints.” So when the news came I couldn't telephone anyway because the Japanese had come between us—that's another story I'll tell you—I said, “We're transferred to X, a wonderful post, wonderful chief, as cheap as Peking.” And then I sent the next telegram an hour later, but in the meantime the telegraph office closed and Elsie didn't get it until the next morning. The second telegram said, “Its Santiago with Norman Armour.” I didn't mention Norman Armour in the first and she didn't get it until the next morning, so she, poor dear, spent a sleepless night.

But when the Japanese were coming into Peking, I felt, “Well, thank God Elsie isn't here. She won't have to suffer, she's down at the seashore and she'll be safe there” because the Japanese had passed Ching Wang Tao. Jack Service's family were there: Caroline Service and her family were staying with Elsie at Ching Wang Tao. And we had to bring all the Americans who lived around and in Peking—you asked how many there were several hundred—into the American Embassy compound. One I remember got out of his car leading a goat. I had Jack Service staying with me because he didn't live in the American Legation quarters. I said, “Have your family and Caroline come and stay with me when they arrive from Ching Wang Tao. Well, I went down to the train with him to meet his family and who hopped off the train but Elsie having left her children and the nurses and the Chinese boys at Ching Wang Tao. I was terribly upset. She'd done it out of the kindness of her heart because my father had died just a few days before and she wanted to come and

comfort me. But I was furious. I said, “You've got to get on the train tomorrow and go right back.” There wasn't another train until then, and she burst into tears and we had quite a scene I'll tell you: you left the children there alone, etc. She got on the train and went back and the very next day the rail was cut. Think of how we'd have felt if we...

Q: You mean the children would have been...

LYON: ...would have been left, I suspect, with two Japanese nurses and two Chinese servants.

Q: Two Japanese nurses?

LYON: Yes, we had Japanese nurses for each child. Anyway, Elsie went back and eventually she got to Tokyo to stay with her family and she had to go with the kids on a coal boat—quite an exciting journey.

Q: Where did you join up again then?

LYON: We used to have a courier that went back and forth between Peking and Tokyo and one day I took the courier job. That got me over and I could see her, and then about three months later, after the Japanese had come into Peking and settled down, she came back and joined me. She was there until we went to Chile, which we're now about to talk about.

Q: You already knew Armour then?

LYON: No, I didn't. I'd never met him but it was...

Q: You mean the first time you met him was in Santiago?

LYON: Yes, when I got to Santiago.

Q: Did you go direct from Peking?

LYON: No, we went home because we had to go on consultation. In those days you had to go by ship, of course, both ways.

Q: The good old days as far as I'm concerned.

LYON: ...the good old days. As I mentioned, my father had died and my brother and I had to sort of divvy up his belongings. I did it very hastily, he had an apartment in New York and my brother would say, “If you don't want this, I do” and I'd say, “If you don't want that, I do.”

Q: So then you arrived in Santiago together in '38?

LYON: Yes, with the two children. We got to Chile as quickly as possible but in those days you had to go by Grace Line which took us about, I think, 18 days if I'm not mistaken...

Q: Oh, how wonderful!

LYON: The reason they wanted me to get down there quickly, there was an election going on for the president. The conservative was Don Gustavo Ross, who was a brilliant economist. It was he who had saved the Chilean nitrate industry by reorganizing it, he was very conservative. The leftist opponent was Don Pedro Aguirre Cerda, whom they called Don Tinto, and he won.

We got there just about two days after the election and as I walked into the office Norman Armour said, “But my goodness, you got here so quickly. We didn't expect you for quite a while.” And here we'd rushed through my father's estate and belongings and everything. But anyway, you asked about Norman Armour.

A man asked me the other day in New York—he knew of Norman Armour—and he asked me also about him, and he asked me about Mr. Grew, and he asked me about

other diplomatic people. He was very interested in our Service, and apparently twice I said, “He was a kind man,” and this man, who is a Wall Street broker said, “Twice you've said 'kind' in relation to people you've worked for. That word is unknown where I work. We're all stabbing each other in the back.” Well, Norman Armour was kind. He looked like Abraham Lincoln, incidentally, and he had the most lined face. Somebody remarked in Chile while I was there, “I've never seen a man with more lines in his face.” And the Brazilian ambassador, Mauricio Nabuco, quickly spoke up and said, “And every one a kind one.” What a nice thing to say about someone! I think he was probably one of the most beloved men in the Service. He was thoughtful, he was a wonderful man to work for, he was understanding, he was able. He was terribly modest. I'd go around with him in Chile and, most Ambassadors when they breezed in on somebody they didn't know, they'd say, “I'm the American Ambassador.” Norman would say, “My name is Armour and aha-aha, I'm connected with the American Embassy.” He was really wonderful and it was such a pleasure to work for him.

Q: Was he there all the time you were there?

LYON: No, no, no. Unfortunately only about a year. He was transferred; he went to the Argentine, and then came Claude Bowers. But Norman had a wife whom he'd met when he was in Russia, only in those days it was St. Petersburg—which is now Leningrad, isn't it?

Q: Yes.

LYON: St. Petersburg. She was called Princess Koudacheff, and he and Whitehouse, his cousin, in the Embassy, helped the family get out of Russia and they got to Norway where eventually Norman married her. She was witty, and she was a great help to him, and although she was Russian she was 100% American in her reactions. She used to say, “I do all the dirty work so Norman can always be charming.” We'd go to parties and when leaving some other person's house I'd see her to the door and to their car and whatnot

and I'd stand waiting with her while he was being polite leaving, and she'd sort of tap her foot and say, “Les departs des diplomates sont tres constipes, n'est-ce pas?” But she was a great help to him. They were a wonderful pair and one was so proud to have them as one's boss and to have him as American Ambassador.

Q: Yes, I'd forgotten. He went to the Argentine and then there was the difficult period during the war.

LYON: He was with us only about a year. I was terribly disappointed because I thought I was in heaven. I remember coming home one night after I'd only been there a short time, and I said, “Elsie, this is too good to be true, it can't last,” and sure enough, he was transferred to the Argentine. And then we got Mr. Bowers, but I don't know if you want to go to him right away or whether you want...

Q: Well, Mr. Bowers came after you had come back to the Department and then gone back again, didn't he? Tell me first about Don Tinto. What interests me here is whether it was really a Popular Front? Did it really make any difference, or was it kind of a semi-socialist government that really didn't change anything much?

LYON: It didn't change much and then Don Tinto (Cerda) died quite soon. I mean he was only president for about a year. The reason they called him Don Tinto was that his wife had a vineyard and, as you know, red wine in Chile is vino tinto. So they called him Don Tinto—a Chilean comic reference to his being leftist. It was very funny after his election because all the conservatives were furious; they were sure that Gustavo Ross was going to win. They said, “We paid those inquilinos (their workers, you see) to vote for Ross, and they took the money but they didn't vote for Ross.” Well, anyway, it was the first Popular Front government in Latin America at that time.

Q: But I gather from what you say about Ross that the influence of—I don't know, what would you call them, of the conservative-liberal opposition, the copper and nitrate people, was very strong even during this period?

LYON: It is still very strong. And then the man that succeeded Don Tinto was called Juan Antonio Rios, who was a socialist, but not a very violent socialist, I mean fairly conservative.

Q: Was there any real Marxist party that was under the thumb of Moscow at this time?

LYON: I don't think so, no. I'll tell you though, we went to the inauguration of Don Tinto, and there was a fellow called Ina Indelicio Prieto—I think he was the representative of the Spanish leftist people—he was the great hero of the Populistas. Also, the outgoing president was Arturo Alessandri, who had been president twice, and he'd been the father of all the social laws. I don't know if you know, but Chile had the most advanced social laws of any Latin American country up to that time. Well, they still have. But they were more often observed in the breach.

Q: So Alessandri was not terribly conservative then?

LYON: No, but he was respected because, as I say, he was the father of the social laws and then president twice. And I was horrified at that inauguration as he walked up the aisle to go to the podium for this transmission del mando, as they call it—they have a big sash they change from the outgoing to the incoming president—people spat on him. I'd never seen anything so horrible. And I felt so sorry for him: here was this man who was a hero, adored by the people. At one point he, Alessandri, was walking with Mrs. Edwards, who is the mother of a great friend of mine in Chile; in fact, my closest friends there were the Edwards. He was walking with this lady—she, of course, was very conservative, and he came to three workmen in the street smoking and he said to them, “Have you a cigarette?” “No, senor. Only Chilean tobacco.” “Oh, I never smoke anything else. Have you got a

light?” And they handed him a cigarette and gave him a light, and they were all tickled to please the ex-president. They walked on a little way and Mrs. Edwards said, “But you don't smoke.” He said, “Three votes.”

Another time he was at some review, standing in the box at the parade, and some roto (peasant) called up to him, “Don Antonio, I'm cold, I'm cold, I'm cold.” And he reached over to one of his friends or a minister standing next to him: “Give me your overcoat.” And he took the man's overcoat and threw it down to the roto.

Q: How would you compare the sort of Rooseveltian hands-off attitude towards all this type of thing—if that's really what it was—with later activist intervention in these matters, not only in Chile but in Latin America generally?

LYON: Well, of course, you must remember, that at this time the Under Secretary of State was Sumner Welles who really knew his Latin America. He was the one, I think, who encouraged Roosevelt to adopt the good neighbor policy. I think it was more easy-going, but then the times were more easy-going. You didn't have the tremendous influence of the Soviets in those days, they were nothing compared to what they are now. What we had in Chile, was a terrible time trying to persuade the Chileans to break relations with the Axis. In the south of Chile they hardly speak Spanish, there are so many German settlers there, and they had a great influence on the policy. Also the Chilean was ruled for many, many years by an upper class; they had control of things and they rather liked the idea that they would maintain their control. I said to one Chilean woman once, “You have two voices. You have a nice gentle voice when you talk with your friends, and us, and your children, and your family. Then when you speak to your servants a harshness comes into it. Like a lash—sort of 'gimme that'. You never sound pleased, nothing like that.” It was really discouraging because the differences were so great. And you'd stay with people in the country and your heart would almost bleed at the misery all around the comfortable house where you were staying. It might be a little down at the heel—because even though there

were people with wealth in Chile it wasn't tremendous wealth, it was nothing compared to our country.

Q: These were the Fundo? It sounds almost medieval.

LYON: Well, it was almost.

Q: And that didn't change very much.

LYON: No, that didn't change at all. The women would all have Paris gowns, and then you'd go out twelve feet from the house and the inguilinos (farm workers) were living in utter misery. What was it I said to one of them? something about “You ought to give them some heat.” “Or give them some doors or something for shelter.” “Well, if we give them those they'd just burn them.” And I said, “Well wouldn't you, if you were cold?” They really have an extraordinary attitude, and so I think all this contributed to Allende's coming into power which was justified.

Q: So there really was no real land or peasant reform during this period at all?

LYON: Nothing. When Elsie and I were there as Third Secretary, as I say, the peasants all lived in squalor. In Chile they call peasants rotos, they lived in these miserable little hutches. When we went back 15 years later we were driving up from the port of Valparaiso and we looked out and I said to Elsie, “My God, they are the same houses, they haven't done anything to them, they're just as bad as ever, only 15 years older.” It was really very, very sad.

I had one funny experience when Mr. Armour was away shortly after I got there. His secretary was called Lucy Lentz—I don't know if you ever ran into her, she was quite a character in the Service—she came rushing into my office one day and said, “There's a man out here and I can't get rid of him, he insists on seeing the Ambassador. I told him the Ambassador was away, he doesn't believe me. Will you talk to him?” I said, “Yes,

I'm the Third Secretary, I take on all odd jobs. Bring him in, I'll talk to him." And he came in, and he was sort of a nice looking man, but he was shabby and he had safety pins instead of cufflinks, and he looked as if he had slept in his suit, and I thought he was an old drunk. But he spoke very nice Oxford English and he wanted to see the Ambassador. I finally convinced him the Ambassador really was away, and as he got up to leave, he said, "You've been very kind, what is your name?" I said, "Cecil Lyon." And he reeled back and said, "You're not pulling my leg are you?" I said, "No, why?" He said, "But my dear chap, my name is Claude Lyon." And he was my cousin. I discovered that he wasn't as much of a bum as I thought. He turned out to be just eccentric. But the place was full of Lyons and they all spoke hardly any English and all the time we were trying to get Chile to break with the Axis I'd have these most terrible arguments with them, and Elsie would say, "But Cecil, Cecil, you're going too far." I'd say, "Oh, they're my cousins. I can talk frankly with them."

Q: Not to editorialize, but I would say that the Roosevelt policy paid off. Every single member of the OAS declared war finally, didn't they?

LYON: Oh, yes. Chile and Argentine were the last. In fact, Roosevelt sent delegates down there trying to encourage them to break with the Axis. One of them being Douglas Fairbanks, Junior, and that was great fun. He was awfully good and he was very brave. He'd made a lot of speeches and then one day they said they wanted him to talk—just before he was leaving—they wanted him to talk to the students at the Santiago College and he said, "Oh, I can't. I've said everything, I don't have any more." Bowers said, "How long do they want you to talk?" "20 minutes." "Twenty minutes at my typewriter," said Bowers, so he sat down and wrote it, his speech. Then we got to the University and here were all the students shouting, "Fairbank, vaya, vaya, or Yankee go home, go home." Doug said, "Throw back your shoulders Cecil," and we plunged through the yelling crowd.

Q: We were talking about Douglas Fairbanks and the students.

LYON: Yes. He did a splendid job. He won them over and by the time we left he was being cheered.

Q: Now tell me something about the Bowers embassy. I know you went back to the Department briefly, but let's keep the Chilean thing together here. Can you contrast the Bowers embassy to the Armour embassy without going off the tape?

LYON: Yes, I can because I got to like the Bowers very much. Naturally it was a sad moment for me when Mr. Armour was transferred. Yes, I did go on home leave before Bowers arrived and then I had a brief stint in the Department in what we called the Bring 'em Back Alive Division—a special section for repatriating Americans after the outbreak of World War II. And then since the Department was out of money, as always, the only way they could get me back to Chile was to send me to a conference in Rio. So I went down with Ellis Briggs to a conference of—I think it was the Chiefs of Missions in Latin America but Bowers wasn't there. I eventually got to Santiago and I immediately went to the Embassy—the Residence. I walked in and here was this little man, all crumpled up, lying on the sofa with a cigar hanging out of his mouth. The cigar was not lit but it was chewed. His doctor apparently stopped his smoking but he went on chewing cigars, and he'd chew a little bit and get it all slimy, and then he'd take a pair of scissors and cut it down and chew the rest of it. And he lay there with a sort of twinkle in his eye. He said, “Well, you've been in Rio. Then you met that fun-loving jokester, playboy, Jeff Caffery didn't you?” Which, as you know, was absolutely the opposite of everything that Caffery was.

Q: Caffery was in Rio? Oh, yes, of course, yes.

LYON: But anyway, you couldn't help liking Bowers. He was the most un-Ambassadorial man you've ever known. He was always in rumpled suits and he sort of walked around, not limping but flat-footed. He had an old shoe that he used to bring to the office because he had a splayed little toe and he'd cut a hole in the shoe with a pair of scissors and he

would change shoes when he got to the office and put on this old shoe. One day I was accompanying him to call on the Foreign Minister—oh, and when he'd leave the office he'd wrap this old shoe up in a newspaper and stick it under his arm—and I suddenly noticed, just as we were going in to the Foreign Minister, that his old shoe was under his arm and I quick got it away. He was really quite charming.

Q: He'd come there from Spain, hadn't he? Was he in Madrid all during the civil war?

LYON: No, he was up in the north. He spent most of the war at Biarritz, out of Spain and just went back from time to time.

Q: That's right, the diplomats were evacuated from Madrid, of course.

LYON: Of course. But because of that, all the Chileans thought he was going to be red as Stalin. They didn't want to receive him, and they all felt badly losing Norman Armour. It took Bowers an awfully long time to win them over.

Q: So the Chilean upper classes were absolutely solid Franco?

LYON: Oh, solid, absolutely. But at the end Bowers became beloved. He couldn't speak a word of Spanish. He never did. He had a Spanish chauffeur that he'd brought from Spain called Pepe and when I went down later in a more exalted position I inherited Pepe and I said, “Pepe, they used to tell me Ambassador Bowers understood more Spanish than he let on.” Pepe said, “No, senor. He couldn't tell the difference between si and non.” And every time I'd go to the Foreign Minister he would say, “Tell the Foreign Minister this,” and then he'd tell some corny joke such as, “The policeman found the body on Wissahickon Avenue and he didn't know how to spell Wissahickon so he moved it to 33rd Street.” I'd try and put this into Spanish and finally I got in a way that I'd say, “Es un Chispe”—I'd warn the Foreign Minister its a joke that's coming. The Foreign Minister would often laugh before we got to the important point. But still you couldn't help liking Bowers.

The funny thing was that he started out by being a little wary of the Chileans, that is the conservatives. And there was a fellow called Don Miguel Cruchaga, who was president of the senate, and we got him and Bowers together. First of all, Bowers had brought with him from Spain a fellow called Biddle Garrison, who'd been a sort of private secretary of Bowers in Spain, and at first Bowers didn't want any of the conservatives to be invited to the parties and things at the Embassy. But little by little Biddle and I infiltrated a few of the more conservative people.

Q: This was still during the Popular Front?

LYON: Yes. It was the Popular Front but it wasn't Pedro Aguirre Cerda, it was Juan Antonio Rios, as I told you, the Socialist who succeeded him.

Q: That must have been a delicate line to tread between the pro-Franco conservative land-owning people and the officials of the government.

LYON: He didn't want to have anything to do with that, but little by little we sneaked them in—Biddle and I. And, as I say, the president of the conservative party and the president of the senate was Don Miguel Cruchaga. Of course Bowers would say, “That fellow Cac-sha-hacha,” he couldn't say Cruchaga. “He's no conservative, he's a liberal,” and they became buddies. Once he met them he was so human he couldn't help but like them. And you can't: Chileans have tremendous charm and they're very intelligent and they're nice, so little by little we got him to meet all factions as I believe Ambassadors should.

Q: How long was Bowers there actually?

LYON: Nine years, because I was with him about three or four and then he stayed on, and on, and on. I didn't succeed him. There was at least one more Ambassador, Beaulac, whom I succeeded...yes, and that was an easy succession.

Q: You must have been in Chile at the time of Pearl Harbor then?

LYON: You bet I was!

Q: Tell me about that.

LYON: Well, from our point of view it was rather disturbing because Elsie's family were in Tokyo, you see. As a matter of fact, we'd gone off to the south of Chile, fishing, with a man who was the head of Anaconda Copper, and he had a fishing place on the Tolten River in the south of Chile. I've never fished much. Elsie and I had been down in the south of Chile—Magellans. We stopped off at Graham's coming back, and he turned on the radio after we'd been out on the river one day—the first day, I think—and he got the news of Pearl Harbor. And, of course, it was a terrible shock to Elsie. Graham had his only daughter living in Hawaii at the time. So we were about the only people in Chile that really had personal touch with Pearl Harbor. The next day we hopped on a train and got back to Santiago as fast as we could. But it didn't make a tremendous difference in Chile. We had taken a Japanese nurse with us to Chile and fortunately I had persuaded her to go home about a year before that because I said, “If things go bad, it would be very bad for you here.”

Q: What was the effect on the conservative pro-Axis element in Chile of Pearl Harbor? Any?

LYON: I don't think anything particularly.

Q: Really? That's amazing.

LYON: I don't remember any, there must have been but I don't...

Q: They must have seen this was going to be big trouble.

LYON: I suppose so but honestly by now I can't remember anything outstanding.

Q: Chile was one of the last to get on the band wagon, wasn't it?

LYON: The second to last.

Q: ...tug of war between—wait a minute, there was a problem with Argentina too, wasn't there?

LYON: I think Chile got on just before Argentine. Do you want to go into the visit of Vice President Wallace?

Q: Oh, yes, tell me about Wallace.

LYON: I said that the President sent down various people, including Douglas Fairbanks, to try and persuade the Latin American countries to break relations with the Axis. He also sent down an American sculptor who did the heads of all the presidents of Latin America, Joe Davidson, who lived in Paris. You probable know him?

Q: No, but we lived in Calder's house three summers ago near Azay-le-Rideau, where Davidson had worked.

LYON: I had to interpret while Davidson sculpted the head of Pedro Aguirre Cerda because he couldn't speak Spanish. He was really remarkable and he did subtly get over ideas that Chile ought to break with the Axis. He was a wonderful sculptor because Pedro Aguirre had funny eyes, it seemed to me he had a sort of a mist in front of him, and somehow, in bronze, Joe Davidson was able to produce that sort of mist as though it were outside of his head.

Q: Well, what about Wallace?

LYON: Oh, that was almost my downfall in the Foreign Service. Wallace came and the government had laid out—this was during the Presidency of Juan Antonio Rios, after Aguirre Cerda—a very elaborate program for him. They were going to take him to the

south of Chile and every minute was taken. And I said to the Ambassador, “I think he ought to see Alessandri,” because, as I have said, he'd been president of Chile twice, he was the father of all their social legislation. And I thought he should see him and Bowers agreed. But the way the Chileans were feeling, you couldn't have him included in anything where the official Chileans were present. Bowers agreed with me, but he didn't do much about it. The day before Wallace was to go on his tour of southern Chile they were having a luncheon for him at the Sociedad National de Agricultura out in the country. And Bowers telephoned and said, “Cecil, there's about an hour between the time we get back and the time we catch the train to the south. If you want to get ahold of Alessandri he could see him.” So I immediately called President Alessandri and he was enchanted to see the Vice President, and he immediately said, “Will he call on me, or will I come to him?” Well Alessandri was an older man and I made a mistake, but I'd been brought up to respect older people, so I said, “Of course, he'll come to you.” Alessandri immediately went to the press and told them that the Vice President had asked to call on him. That word got back to the government, so immediately they got after me and said, “We have to cancel it, its impossible.” They said they wouldn't allow it and they would have to cancel everything else if this were not resolved. So I had to call the ex-president and tell him the thing was canceled. Well he was furious, needless to say, and I said, “There's just not time.” I put it on that score, “He's catching the train, there's just definitely not time.” “Will he see me when he comes back?” And I said, “I think he's awfully busy but we'll see what we can do,” hoping that something would save me. Well, we went off to the south of Chile and all hell broke loose while we were away.

Q: On account of this?

LYON: Yes. I mean it was in the press and Alessandri made a big to-do about it and everything. We got back and immediately he called me and said, “Is he going to see me?” I said, “I don't know. Its awfully tightly booked, everything is booked Mr. President.” He really cursed me out, practically. It was just as if you had been in a foreign embassy and

Roosevelt called you up and cursed you out, you know the ex-president cursing out a young secretary.

Then I got down to the Embassy and nobody had done the seating at the table; that was the night that Wallace was entertaining President Rios at the Embassy. I was quickly putting out the cards and all of a sudden the door flew open and everybody came in to the table. And I might say that there was a Foreign Service Inspector in Chile at that time. Well, anyway, it had been arranged that after dinner the President and Mr. Wallace would go to a little sitting room upstairs—they'd take the elevator up. Before the dinner was over, all the people who'd been invited to the reception arrived—not all, but crowds—and the hall was packed and Wallace and President Rios had to sort of push their way through the crowd to get to the elevator. They got to the elevator and it wasn't there. It was stuck on the floor above. Finally I rushed upstairs and we got it down, and they got in, and we got upstairs, and the butler had locked the little sitting room and we couldn't get in. Bowers said, “God dammit Cecil, what's going on here? Nothing works. What's the matter?” And I just shrank, and the Inspector was standing in the background.

Well, anyway to make a long story short...

Q: This was in what building?

LYON: The Residence, after the dinner. I thought, “Everything is breaking over my head with an Inspector there—oh, God, I'm ruined.” And then they went off the next day to Valparaiso with Alessandri screaming and yelling, “Is he going to come and see me?” and I saying, “Well, there's just no time.” “You can't do this to me, Lyon, you can't do this.” After they got back from Valparaiso, Wallace took me aside and he said, “I think I know what you're going through.” It was very nice of him. I was so glad because I took the fire instead of the Ambassador taking it, you see. And it went on and on and after they left...

Q: Alessandri never got to see Wallace then?

LYON: No, he never got to see him. The government wouldn't allow it, they were that furious, it was that tense a thing. I felt that Alessandri would hit me in the face if he ever saw me, but I used to see him quite a bit, not alone, but at other parties and things—and he said to a Chilean friend, “Why don't Cecil and Elsie ever come and see me anymore?” Which was nice, so we made up.

Then just before I was leaving for the United States, he said, “Cecil, tell me the truth, didn't the government stop our interview?” I'd been transferred and I knew I'd be safe to tell him and I was just about to, but I said to myself, “No, God dammit, you've stuck it out this long.” So I said, “You know, Don Arturo, there just wasn't time,” and I went off and never did tell him the truth.

Q: Do you have anything that you remember, or that you'd like to comment about Allende and the later developments?

LYON: Oh, yes, I certainly do. In the Pedro Aguirre Cerda government, Allende was the Minister of Health and I used to know him quite well when I was the Third Secretary. He would come to the house for dinner and everything. Then when I went back in the more exalted position, I asked him for dinner. He wouldn't come near me because he didn't want to have anything to do with that imperialismo del norte. I think he was a thorough Communist. Maybe not in name. But I said this once to Chip Bohlen, Bohlen said, “He's not a card-carrying Communist.” I said, “I don't know whether he's a card-carrying Communist or not but I'm sure all his sympathies were with the Communists.” After I retired I went back to Chile just after the fall of Allende and I talked to people like the son of Alessandri, and Frei who had been president. But they all said that Chile was just on the road to destruction under Allende. Frei said, “You ask me how I feel. I feel like a man who has been in the hospital living with tubes in his throat, and tubes in his arm, and he finally gets out, he so glad that he's not dead that he doesn't worry about how he's going to live for the next few years.” This is the way those people felt in Chile.

I haven't much more to say about him but I'm quite convinced that he was thoroughly Communist.

Q: During this later phase, though, that you're talking about, what was the orientation of the man you were talking to? What was the politics of the man you were talking to?

LYON: Alessandri was liberal, and he was the head of a big paper mill outside of Santiago. So he was naturally a rightist. Frei was also a liberal.

Q: Were they unhappy or happy about the rather active role that the United States played in all this.

LYON: They were delighted. They wanted to get out of things brought about by Allende at any cost. And it was mostly the women, you know, who got rid of Allende. They all paraded. I talked to people like our former servants after this had happened and they were all relieved that they'd finally got rid of that government. So I think that Chile was in a very bad way. There was a sort of a blue book that they published which gave the list of all the people who were going to be liquidated under the Allende regime. They were all the sort of people that I knew, people that owned the Mercurio, the big newspaper which is the Times of Chile, and people like that so I think they were well out of it. I know now people criticize Pinochet—Elsie in particular is very critical of Pinochet—but I think Chile had to have sort of a cleaning up after Allende and they had to get rid of all those people, or it would have gone totally leftist—I mean totally Communist. So people that I trusted like Frei, Alessandri, Barros Jarpa, a leading Chilean barrister, and many others were convinced that Chile would have gone Commie.

Q: You mean like Cuba?

LYON: Yes, like Cuba. Of course, Castro and Allende were palsy-walsy—so I think it was a good thing that they got rid of him...and I think certainly from the American point of view

it was. He'd already nationalized the copper companies and things like that. Also he'd nationalized most of the banks.

Q: Well, let's see, what happened next? Oh, yes. You went to Cairo in '43 and were there until '45, is that right?

LYON: '45, yes. After I left Chile I came back to the Department and Larry Duggan, who'd been my classmate at Harvard, was the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs and he put me on the Chilean desk where I spent a short time. Kippy Tuck, who had been our last Charg# d'Affaires in France to the Vichy government, was interned in Baden Baden for a long time, and finally came home and I was with him one day. He was a very old friend, and I jokingly...he had been appointed Minister to Cairo which was a very appropriate appointment for him because he spoke Arabic.

Q: Was the Minister the top banana?

LYON: Yes, because in those days we didn't have an Embassy, we had a Legation in Cairo.

Q: Was that because of the British?

LYON: No, in a lot of countries we had that—in Latin America up until a certain time. It was just because they were countries, I imagine, considered less important so you didn't have an Ambassador. You had Ministers. But anyway, Kippy—his father had been a judge on the International Courts in Egypt, and so Kippy grew up in Cairo. He went to school at Les Rosiers in Switzerland, but in his boyhood he lived in Cairo and so he spoke Arabic. And I jokingly said, “If you need a saffrogi in Egypt, Barkis is willing.” And to my amazement he asked for me. I went there during the war...

Q: I know! It was right in the middle of the worst aspects of the North African campaigns.

LYON: Well, I'll tell you it was very interesting. Kippy knew everybody because, as I say, he'd been there as a young man, and there was a guy called Hassanein Pasha, who at that time—I don't remember what his title was but he had been tutor to the King, and he had a high job in the palace, Chief of whatever it was in the palace. And he'd been educated at Eton and Oxford. He was raving against the British. One night at dinner at Kippy's, just the three of us and Mrs. Tuck, I said, “Well, Pasha you'll always be grateful to the British for driving the Germans out of here, they came pretty close to Cairo, didn't they?” And to my amazement he said, “We wouldn't have minded being occupied by the Germans. We'd have gotten on very well with the Germans. We degenerate countries have to know how to play one power against the other.” Well now, this was the man who was closest to the King. He was, incidentally, the King's mother's lover, which everybody knew. So you can imagine that poor, young boy was not getting very good advice from a man like that, although he was a brilliant man.

Q: How old was Farouk when you were there?

LYON: When I was there I should say he was about twenty-one.

Q: Oh, as young as that?

LYON: He was just a young boy and he grew up to be a great fat thing, but when we were there he was a very handsome young man. The awful thing was, you'd go to parties given for him, and he, being young, liked to get up and conduct the band or play the saxophone, and he'd go on and on until the wee hours in the morning. The Chancery opened fairly early—I think 8:00 in the morning, because of the heat, so we could close earlier in the afternoon. I would be exhausted, but I'd have to stay up. Farouk was rather nice because at a certain point, usually about 12:30 or 1:00 in the evening, they'd have supper, and he'd retire to the library where he'd be served supper. And he'd send word: “Anybody who wants to sneak away, let them.” So if he'd do that, Elsie and I would sneak away. But it got to be such a chore for most of us that we assigned one young man, John Brinton,

who was an Assistant Military Attach#, to play around with His Majesty, Farouk, and he was permitted to come to the office later in the morning. So he and his wife, they were a charming young couple, were sort of assigned to the King.

Q: Was the feeling about the British that you just described shared by other Egyptians?

LYON: Yes, a good deal. They were fed up...

Q: Anything better than the protecting power—it was the same way in Morocco.

LYON: Sir Miles Lampson, who was the British High Commissioner, used to give the King orders and he didn't like that. Lampson had a huge Rolls Royce and everywhere he'd go, his Rolls Royce would be left parked—I mean if he was at the theater or something—right where other peoples' cars couldn't get in. And little things like that annoyed the Egyptians a great deal.

I think the most important thing that happened while I was in Egypt was the visit of FDR, President Roosevelt.

Q: Oh, and the three monarchs. Yes, tell us about that.

LYON: Well, one day—that was in '45 so it was my last year there. I got summoned by the Minister, Kippy Tuck. I went to his office and he said, “Look at this.” He handed me a telegram which said, “This message to be decoded by the Minister himself.” Kippy said, “I haven't decoded a telegram in years. I don't know how to decode a telegram. Can you do it?” It was not the old gray code, I guess, something more complicated. I said, “I haven't done one either. I'm not sure I can.” “What will we do?” said Kippy. I said, “I'll tell you what we do. We get the code clerk, or the chief code clerk, and we swear her to secrecy, and we have her decode it, and not to tell anyone else in the code room anything.” So we did that, and she brought the telegram which said, “The President will be aboard the USS Quincy in the Great Bitter Lakes...” and then it gave the dates, I've forgotten what

they were now. “He would like to meet Emperor Haile Selassie, King Ibn Saud and King Farouk. Please make all arrangements.” It was really the most difficult assignment.

Q: How long did you have to do this?

LYON: We had about three weeks, or something like that. We didn't even know where he was coming from. Of course, we now know he was on his way back from Yalta. But had it been known that these people were coming into Egypt they would have had to arrange official visits, you see, because King Farouk had paid an official visit to Ibn Saud. But I must say they cooperated beautifully, the Egyptians, when we told them what was happening. We got all these three gentlemen in—these two gentlemen in, one was already there—and we kept the umbrella man, Haile Selassie, out at Payne Field which was where we had our air base. We had Ibn Saud on a destroyer—a destroyer was sent for him—and they all cooperated beautifully. Chip Bohlen was accompanying the President and he came up to Cairo.

Q: Oh, he'd been at Yalta, of course.

LYON: He'd been at Yalta and he said, “Cecil, you don't know the President, you'd better come down and meet him.” And I said, “Chip, I'm supposed to tend the store while Kippy is down with all of you.” He said, “Oh, nonsense.” And he went in and talked to Kippy and I'm so glad he did because I did go down. I went aboard the Quincy and incidentally, President Roosevelt looked frightful...

Q: I was going to say this was the period when he was very ill.

LYON: He looked very badly and I asked Flynn about him but I'll go into that a little later. And at one point the President was waiting for Winston Churchill, who was coming aboard to visit him—he'd flown out from England—and the President said, “Let's all have a photograph.” So we all lined up and I'll show you the photograph in the music room afterwards. I happened to be standing behind the President and I heard this conversation.

Winant, who was our Ambassador in London had come over—he'd been sent for—and the President turned to him and said, “Gil, you ought to have been aboard yesterday, I had them all aboard.” He said, “I've got one of them over there now on one of my destroyers.” It sounded very imperious, but of course, they were his destroyers. He said, “I got nowhere with the big one. I was a 100% failure with the big one. I rather liked the little one.”

Q: That's Haile Selassie?

LYON: That's Haile Selassie, and the big one was Ibn Saud. He said, “Winston doesn't like any of them.” I said to Chip Bohlen afterwards, “My God, Chip, he doesn't even know their names.” And Chip said, “Don't worry, Cecil. He and Winston are ruling the world today. He doesn't need to know their names.”

Then there was a very interesting photograph of Bill Eddy, who was a Military Attach#—I think he was a Marine.

Q: Oh, Colonel Eddy. Wasn't he at Tangier for a while?

LYON: Yes, I believe so. He was the interpreter for the Ibn Saud conversation and there's a picture of him kneeling at the feet of Ibn Saud and Roosevelt as he interpreted—kneeling on one knee. I said to him, “The President said he was a 100% failure with Ibn Saud.” He said, “I'll say he was. He said to Ibn Saud: 'As I flew over this vast desert I thought how marvelous it would be if we could irrigate it all and have it all green again as in Biblical days.' And Ibn Saud replied, Yes, and if you send me any more God damned Jews, I'll murder them.'” Ibn Saud wasn't impressed at all by the power of the USS Quincy on which he came aboard. He just took it all in his stride and he was that way with the President.

Q: He brought his sheep and goats with him too.

LYON: That was on the destroyer, either sheep or goats, I've forgotten which. They built a fire on the deck of the destroyer to roast them and the poor captain almost had conniptions.

Oh, I started to tell you. The President, I thought, looked frightful. And about a week after that, Kippy went away exhausted after all this and I was in charge. And I kept getting telegrams from Moscow that Ed Flynn—I don't know if you remember who he was? but he was the Boss of the Bronx, they called him Paving Stone Flynn, or Cobblestone Flynn, or something because he allegedly had them build a driveway for himself out of the city's funds—or paving stones. He'd gone with the President to Yalta to try and do something about the church, he being high in the Catholic Church. And when he'd gone with the President he hadn't even taken a passport. And then the President left Flynn behind after Yalta to go to Moscow to talk with the Russians about the church and trying to get permission for a priest to go to Moscow for the American Embassy. Then Flynn found himself without a passport. So they were sending telegrams to me to see if he couldn't get into Cairo without a passport. He did, and he was staying at the Shepherd's Hotel and he found it very cold so—Elsie was away—I said “Come and stay with me.” And he came and stayed with me so I got to know him quite well. I said, “I was shocked by the President's appearance. And who is this man Truman anyway?” I didn't know anything about Truman in those days. He said, “Don't worry about Truman, he'll put things back where they belong. He'll give the Congress its authority, its rights and he wants to do things accordingly as our Founding Fathers wanted.” And he said, “Don't worry about the President.” I said, “Well, his face is all shrunk.” He said, “Oh, he has just had a lot of teeth out.” Well we know that wasn't true. He went home and died a few weeks later. And I'm told that when people saw him in the movies in New York after Yalta, they said, “Oh, my goodness!” and you could sort of hear a sigh in the theaters.

Q: Oh, I'll never forget his death. We were in Annapolis then. I think I told you it was as if one of the mainsprings in the universe had broken when the news came through about Roosevelt.

LYON: Well another thing, Flynn might have got me into trouble because he had this reputation of not being too honest, I guess. He came home one day and he said, “I've just seen a beautiful star sapphire, just like the one Joe Davies gave his wife, and I'm going to get it. But I never know how much money I have, so I'm going to just ask you to pick it up for me and my secretary will send you a check.” Well, I thought, you know, “Young secretary receives $6,000 from Ed Flynn” or something like that. So I said, “Oh, I'm afraid I can't do that. It isn't allowed.” And I talked him out of it but I had a few horrible moments thinking of all the trouble I might get into.

We had a funny time—not a funny time but rather a serious time. Elsie hadn't been able to get out to join me. I'd got there ahead of her. During the war we'd rented our house and were having some trouble getting it back in Washington so Elsie stayed on to take care of that. And then a fellow called Freddy Lyon, who was in the State Department, was head of all the sort of hush-hush business...

Q: Freddy Lyon was the Consul in Algiers, wasn't he?

LYON: Later, but at this time he was in the Department doing security, I guess they called it. Mr. Grew, my father-in-law, was then Under Secretary of State. And one day Freddy came to Mr. Grew and said, “I understand Elsie is going on such and such a boat.” He said, “I haven't been able to sleep at night because I'm worried that the German submarines have been taking people off boats and they might, because she's your daughter, grab her and the children.” So Mr. Grew told Elsie and said, “Its your decision, but naturally I'm going to worry.” So Elsie decided to wait and came in a convoy and that was that. And on the convoy one of the children got ill, Alice, I guess it was, and they didn't have a doctor aboard, and Elsie said they had the most wonderful scene of the doctor

coming aboard from a destroyer that came alongside them, and they swung him over in the boatswain's chair. Elsie said it was wonderful.

Cairo was a sad place in many ways. The Copts were very rich, you know. They all had properties up the Nile, sugar plantations and things, and they would entertain the King in the most lavish manner. You'd go and dine off gold plates, with food overflowing. And then you'd go out in the street, and you'd have to step over the people who were sleeping on the sidewalks. This, of course, upset Elsie, who is terribly sensitive, and she was not too happy at all during our stay in Cairo. There was a very rich Egyptian called Aboud Pasha and he'd made a great fortune. He was a self-made man, and he had a Scots wife. I got to know him quite well, and I tried to interest him in doing something for social laws, or to help the poor. I got nowhere even thougI thought he was the sort of man who might see the need for change.

Then we had a Russian refugee lady who we became great friends with. She was an artist and the only way she could support herself was painting. You'll notice around this house paintings of our children which she painted; our dog and Elsie; she painted everything. I think she charged about $100 or got about the equivalent of $100—or maybe $50 in those days, I don't know. Yet we could persuade none of these rich Egyptians to have their children painted, although it was pin money to them, but they had no interest in helping people.

Q: Well, of course, there's the Moslem taboo also, isn't there, about having yourself photographed or painted?

LYON: That puts a better light on it. I thought they were just being...

Q: Its not universal, but it certainly was taboo in Morocco.

LYON: I thought it was just because they were not kind enough to help people.

Q: Tell me. What was the actual status of the British by '45 when you left?

LYON: They were still there. It was after the canal business that they were out.

Q: Was there still a Protectorate with a Commissioner? There was no Embassy, it was a Residency there, wasn't it?

LYON: Yes, yes, that's right. They had a High Commissioner.

Q: Somebody said that after they left they just changed the label from Residency to Embassy, and business went on as usual.

LYON: I think they did. Sir Miles Lampson, a great big six- foot-three or-four man, weighing about 250 pounds—they used to call him Porky—well anyway, he came in to see Kippy Tuck one day and I was with them. He was roaring with laughter. He by then had become Lord Kilearn. He said, “You know a funny thing has just happened. An America journalist came and he interviewed me and when he got through he said, 'Oh you know, its so nice to talk to you, Lord Kilearn. The last time I was here there was a horrible man called Sir Miles Lampson.'” He thought it was a wonderful joke.

I don't know what else I can say. I've gone into a great length really: Ed Flynn, the President's health. Of course, as I've always had at every post, I had very good relations with my British colleagues and there was a fellow called Jim Bowker, who was then my vis-a-vis—we had got to be very good friends. And I was always amused the way the British handled things compared to us. He and I motored up to Baalbek. And then we went to Israel, and when we got to the border the British were in charge, and some soldier wouldn't let me through because I didn't have a visa. So Bowker just took my passport and wrote me a visa and signed it British Minister, and they let us right through. Can you imagine doing that in our Service?

Q: So then in '45 you came back to Washington, is that right?

LYON: Right. Ellis Briggs, who'd been Counselor in Santiago when I was the little Third Secretary there, had become Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs. And he asked me to come back and take over what was called the Office of River Plate Affairs. It was Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. It consisted of me and one other fellow, Stuart Rockwell who did most of the work, I might say. Then Norman Armour, who'd been Ambassador in the Argentine—no, no, he'd been in Spain in the meantime—and he came back and was made an Assistant Secretary of State, who was supposed to be in charge of all the regional offices, Europe, ARA, etc., etc. But none of those people particularly wanted to have another layer put above them, so it ended up by Armour's doing almost entirely Latin American work. Later the post was raised to an Under Secretary, when Bob Murphy took it, and so he outranked the regional Assistant Secretaries. But Armour asked Briggs if he'd release me from my River Plate Affairs to be his assistant...in France, of course, as you and I know, they call it Chef de Cabinet. The Cabinet consisted only of me and Gene McAuliffe and two lady secretaries. Marion Armour was one who'd been in Tokyo so I knew her. In any event, it was a most interesting year. Norman only agreed to stay a year as I recall it, and I really was such an admirer of Armour that I was enchanted to be working for him. I accompanied him to the Rio Conference in the summer of 1947. The Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, which was signed in Rio, President Truman flew down to sign it on the USS Quincy, which I'd last seen in Alexandria, with President Roosevelt aboard. The treaty provided for peaceful settlement of all disputes in the Inter-American system. And you probably recall that Article Twelve of that Treaty stated that an attack on one is construed as an attack on all. So you consult, and either come to the victim's aid, or take such measures as you see fit. And that was the basis of the same provision in the NATO treaty, some years later.

Well, we went off to Rio or to be exact Petropolis for that is where the Conference actually took place. We were put up in some grand hotel there, and Walter Donnelly was on the delegation and he was assigned a suite which was called the Bridal Suite. He took one look at it and said, “I wouldn't sleep in there for anything.” So John Dreier and I were told

that we had had to occupy it. In any event, the hotel had been decorated by the New York decorator Dorothy Draper, so it was rather swish, and the bridal suite was the swishiest of all. All the young secretaries, the lady secretaries, wanted to see it and there they would come and find Dreier and me in it.

Senator Vandenberg was one of the delegates to Petropolis meeting; that was the first time we had ever met. I was terribly impressed with him (I've just been reading his papers—the Vandenberg Papers) and he really contributed a great deal to our foreign policy. Having been an isolationist, he became a rabid internationalist and he was more or less the father of a non-partisan foreign policy.

Q: That's very interesting. So he was really beginning the bi-partisan business with the Rio Treaty—as you just said the Rio Treaty is a model in its way.

LYON: Then it worked out for NATO, and I think Vandenberg was a delegate to the San Francisco Conference. He was the Republican leader then and Connally was the Democratic leader of the Senate. Connally also was present and I was always impressed with something very kind he did. Some time after the conference—several months, I think it was—we were spending Thanksgiving with Elsie's family in Washington. We were having Thanksgiving luncheon and I was called to the telephone. It was Senator Connally and he said, “Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks and I just want to thank you for all the help you gave me when we were in Rio.” He'd called our house and found we weren't there, and he heard where we were lunching. He took the trouble to call the Grews, which I thought was an awfully nice thing. I was always a little nervous with members of the House and Senate because I have this English accent for my sins and in fact some of them would say, “Why are you in the American diplomatic service? Why aren't you in the British?” And I always felt a little nervous when they came around but Connally was so nice and so was Vandenberg.

Mrs. Armour, was absolutely charming but witty and sharp as could be. The Vandenbergs were having cocktails with the Armours and Mrs. Armour said, “Senator, drink up your drink. We've got to go in to dinner.” And Senator Vandenberg said, “Mrs. Armour, I'm not used to being talked to that way.” She said, “Drink up your drink.” From then on he ate out of her hand.

Q: The Rio Treaty was in 1947, wasn't it?

LYON: Yes, but the Organization of American States dates from 1948, the Bogota Conference, in the spring of 1948.

Q: And NATO was created in 1949. That's very interesting. Those are big deals. Were all of the Latinos represented?

LYON: Oh, yes, they were all there. About three months later we went off to Bogota. Mrs. Armour couldn't go with us to this conference and as we got on the plane to leave, she said, “Now you boys be careful. Without me you're going to get in trouble.” And did we not get in trouble! The whole conference blew up in our face. There was a revolution. I felt sorry for the Colombian officials. They'd gone to great trouble to see that all the delegates of all countries were well taken care of. Secretary Marshall, who was head of our delegation, was given a house in town. In it he had with him General Ridgway and Pat Carter, his aide, and Mr. Harriman and Mr. Martin—not of the World Bank but the Export-Import Bank.

Q: Why was the conference called? What was it supposed to be doing? Was it OAS?

LYON: It was to make the final agreement on the OAS Charter. It was at the Bogota Conference, in 1948, later known as the “Bogotaso”, because of the uprising which occurred, that the Charter of the Organization of the American States, OAS, was adopted. By its provisions the Inter-American Conference was made the supreme organ for the formation of policy. It was to meet at least once every five years, as I recall, and each

state would have one vote. The meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was retained to consider problems of an urgent nature. It could be convened upon the request of any state. The former governing Board of the Pan American Union was established as the Organization of the American States, OAS, with each state having a representative holding the rank of Ambassador.

The so-called “Pact of Bogota” was also adopted here. By its terms all the American states agreed to settle all disputes by peaceful means.

In any event our Mr. Armour was given a house in the suburbs and he had with him John Dreier, me, and Paul Daniels, who was then Director of ARA. Well, we hadn't been there two days when Mr. Armour and a Chilean friend of ours Manuel Pereira went to lunch on the other side of the city at a hotel where we were meeting various people, and we got word that there was trouble. There were riots in the street and Mr. Armour with his usual consideration for all the staff said, “Well, we must get back for the secretaries, the women secretaries. We don't want them left alone if there's trouble.” We started back and people were running riot. They were upsetting cars, setting fire to them; they had machetes; they'd broken in...first of all, they'd broken into the Bodegas, wine places, and they'd got lots of pisco and they were drinking like crazy. Then they broke into the hardware stores and got these great machetes, you know, and they were chopping people down. We walked back and I don't know why we weren't killed. Our office was on the fifth floor of an office building across from another office building where our Chancery was. We had a separate office for the delegation. The big doors had been shut, and we were waiting for them to be opened —and I stepped forward. Somebody who'd been looking out the window said later, “You stepped forward just in time because a guy came down with a machete and was going to chop your head off.” We got in the office building and there were people streaming all over the streets, and breaking into shop windows and grabbing some little bauble only to be chopped down by another vandal, with a machete, to grab the bauble. Then it got dark, and we couldn't get out of the office building. We were isolated, and it's lucky we were because we had all these women stenographers and what not. The mob set fire to

buildings. I had been told there was so little oxygen in the air in Bogota that fires didn't last long. But you ought to have seen Bogota that night. It was just flames all over the place. Fortunately General Marshall had got out all right to the Ambassador's house. I think he spent the night there. This thing went on all night, with some amusing incidents: one man telephoned and Mr. Armour said, “Take it for me.” “Please tell Mr. Armour I don't think I'll be able to have the dinner tonight I'm giving for him.” And I said, “I don't think he could come to it even if you had it.”

Q: What set this off?

LYON: Well, they shot a man, a leftist political leader, called Guitan, and that just stirred up everything. They were all against the government. They thought it had been planned by the government, to have this man assassinated.

Q: It was not an anti-American, anti-Rio demonstration?

LYON: No, no. It wasn't anti-American. It was a purely local thing against the government, the president and various people in the government. As I recall a popular labor leader, called Guitan I think, was killed and that set the whole thing off. As I say, it went on all night and at one point— there was a paint shop in the bottom of our office building and we thought if that catches fire we're for it, you see, although it was a modern building. It did catch fire, and the flames kept coming up and they got up to about the third floor—we were on the fifth, as I recall—and funnily enough we were able to telephone, had no trouble telephoning, and we telephoned over to the people in the Chancery—there were several there—and we said, “We may have to evacuate this building and go over to your building.” We planned that the men would make two rows, two lines with an aisle between them and let the girls run between them. We started to go and we got down several floors. I remember Mildred Osborjorson, I think she was the Secretary's secretary, sitting on the stair. I said, “Milly, you look pretty perky.” She said, “'It's lucky I've got on a long skirt; you

don't see how my knees are knocking together I'm so nervous." But we didn't have to evacuate. The flames subsided.

Oh, and then another event which was perfectly awful. I'm no good with sickness, as Elsie will tell you. I don't know what to do, and I don't like it, and I just want to run away from it. They said, "There's a man having a fit on the floor below." Norman said, "I'm busy, Cecil, you go down and take care of it." So I went down and here was this poor devil having an epileptic fit. And I said, "Goodness. Perhaps we ought to put something warm over him, let's get a blanket. Look, maybe we ought to put something under his head." Then I didn't know what to do next and I telephoned to a doctor over in the Chancery. I said, "What do you do with a fellow having an epileptic fit?" He said, "Well, keep him warm and put his head up—put something under his head." So I guess instinctively at times like that, you do such things.

Finally dawn broke. Norman and I were standing by the window looking out at this dreadful desolation, broken shop windows, streets cluttered with burned out cars and litter. There were also bodies all over the streets, perfectly ghastly. Norman said, "Have you ever seen anything more dreadful?" I said, "No." And sometime after, Norman said, "You know, I've founded an organization, the s.o.b.s, the Survivors of Bogota, but I don't dare tell General Marshall that he's the head of it."

When I was in Berlin, General Ridgway, who by then had become Supreme Commander of NATO—he succeeded Larry Norstad—and...

Q: Lauris Norstad. He died? I didn't know he died.

LYON: He died the other day. But anyway, Ridgway came to Berlin and all the brass were lined up on the tarmac to greet him. And I stood there in my little blue suit, sticking out like a sore thumb. They brought the Supreme Commander down the line and they got to me

and they said, “Do you know General Ridgway?” I said, “Yes, I know that SOB” And all the brass blanched, and moved along, and I never had a chance to explain about Bogota.

Armour had a nice house out in the suburbs and they decided to move General Marshall and his aide, Carter, out there because General Marshall's house was right in the center of town and they were scared he might be attacked. So, as usual, John Dreier and I were chosen to evacuate Norman's and go and occupy General Marshall's room and his aide, Pat Carter's room. They gave us a grease gun and John and I didn't know what the hell to do with a grease gun, so we threw it in the drawer. And we tossed coins as to who was to sleep in Marshall's bed and who would sleep in the aide's bed, which was in the adjoining room. I won, I got the aide's bed. But we went to sleep and nothing happened. However, we decided then and there that we'd have a resolution introduced at the United Nations, that “If you're going to be murdered, you have to be murdered in your own right, not because they think you're somebody else.” We had visions of them coming in and shooting us, but, as I said, nothing happened and we slept soundly.

The conference went on. The next day the Argentines in particular wanted to get out of Bogota, they were scared. A lot of the other Latinos wanted to move the conference somewhere else, but General Marshall stood firm. He said, “We will not be driven out. We will stand our ground, and we'll stay here. We won't let these ragamuffins drive us out.”

And that was a funny thing because while Norman and I were in the office building, about 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning, a phone call came through from Washington, Lovett on the other end of the line, wanting to know how we were, and to give us encouragement. Norman said, “We're not even out of the building yet.” And Lovett said, “Oh, by the way, Myra is on the phone in New York. I can put her through, she has been trying to reach you.” They switched her through, she lying in her bed in the Waldorf in New York, and we isolated in that building.

Q: Mrs. Armour?

LYON: Yes, Mrs. Armour. She said, “Lamby, I've read in the paper that they're going to move the conference to Cuba, and you have no thin clothes. I'm sending you clothes.” Norman said, “Myra, we're not even out of the building yet.”

I think it was typical of the modern world. Here we were completely isolated and still we were able to talk with New York. Well, they didn't move the conference and it all ended fairly successfully.

I didn't mention another thing—just in passing. It's worth mentioning about Bogota—we later found that Castro was down there, leading and stirring up all the mobs that were revolting at the Bogotaso, as they called it.

Q: This was long before the revolution in Cuba, wasn't it?

LYON: Yes, but he was learning his trade, so we found out later.

Q: Let's see. We got anything more on Latin American affairs?

LYON: Do you remember George Messersmith? He'd been an Assistant Secretary of State. He was very wordy. Before I went with Norman Armour, when I had that Argentine position, Messersmith was Ambassador in the Argentine. Peron was Chief of State and Messersmith was trying to defend him; he'd got localitis a bit, and he kept writing pages and pages of letters—I mean letters of about twelve pages each—to the President with a copy to the Secretary of State, and they'd all end up on my desk to answer. When I was starting off to visit my bailiwick, Will Clayton, who was an Assistant Secretary of State, said, “Cecil, tell George Messersmith please to stop sending me those awful long letters. He says he doesn't have time to write a short letter but I don't have time to read those long ones. And the President says he doesn't have time.” I said, “I think you'd better tell him, Mr. Secretary. I don't think I can.” When I went down to Buenos Aires I may have hinted at it but I never really said it to him. I didn't quite dare.

When the time came for Norman Armour to leave the Department—he said he was only going to stay a year—I felt that any Foreign Service Officer who was worth his salt ought to take a turn behind the Iron Curtain. So I went to Chris Ravndal, who was then Chief of Personnel, and I said I hoped they'd give me an appointment behind the Iron Curtain. He looked at me as if I'd gone crazy. Nobody else apparently was seeking such jobs. But they sent me to Warsaw in '48.

Q: Then you were there for two years.

LYON: For two years, yes. It was pretty grim but I'm awfully glad we did it. As usual the Department was out of funds, but they had money to send some people to the NATO Conference in Paris and I was sent along to that.

Q: At the Palais de Chaillot.

LYON: The Palais de Chaillot, you're quite right. And, as I recall, Marshall was the head of that delegation too. John Foster Dulles was there. He wasn't in the Department, but everyone knew he was going to be Dewey's Secretary of State if Dewey were elected, as everybody thought he would be. There was one dreadful man there called Katz-Suchy of Poland. He did nothing but attack poor Mr. Dulles all the time. And when Dewey was defeated, I can hear him now: he was saying, “Go back to Wall Street. You're no good as a diplomat. Why are you trying to do this? Go back to Wall Street, Mr. Dulles.” And I thought, “What a stinker!” And Dulles just sat doodling. And then at one reception he came up to me and said, “Why have I been wasting my time trying to flatter Dulles,” which was just the opposite of what he was doing. “He's no good. He's not going to be anything now.” Katz-Suchy was violently anti-U.S. publicly. But I felt he was covering up, and I was right; he later defected. I don't think to this country but in Europe.

Q: Let's go to the Berlin airlift and what you saw there.

LYON: Well, as I told you, there were no funds in the Department to get me to Warsaw, and there were none to get me from Paris to Warsaw. In those days we had a military attach#'s plane, not in Warsaw, but in Frankfurt, that used to come into Warsaw bringing in the pouches. That was later stopped by the Poles. But the plane was sent to Paris to take Elsie and me and our little daughter, Lilla, to Warsaw. We stopped in Berlin, which was in the midst of the airlift. It was the most impressive thing that you could imagine. Every three minutes a plane would swoop down, unload, take off and another one would swoop down, unload, take off.

All the American diplomats, the people in the office of the High Commissioner in Berlin, had suitcases packed, ready to get out at a moment's notice. I really had very little sympathy for them because we were going on about 200 miles farther behind the Iron Curtain.

I remember going in to Tommy Thompson's office, who was an Assistant Secretary for Western Europe, just before I went to Warsaw. It was dusk and he was sitting in his chair with his feet up on his desk looking out on Washington, and I said, “Why so pensive?” He said, “I'm just trying to think whether we should evacuate all our diplomats from Eastern Europe.” I said, “Well, make up your mind because I'm on my way to Warsaw.” But they didn't evacuate and I must say it was a bit scary going into Warsaw. But it was one of the most fascinating assignments I've ever had.

En route we were fogged in and we couldn't get there from Berlin. We came down in Hamburg for some reason—I can't remember why—where we had to wait a day or so until the weather cleared.

Q: I'll bet that place was in great shape, wasn't it? Hamburg must have been a mess.

LYON: Awful. But anyway we stayed in some Army rest house or something and we had with us—I shall never forget it—a little cocker spaniel called Sharky. He wasn't allowed in

this Army barracks so I took Elsie's fur coat and put it over my arm, put the dog in between and folded it over. Each time I went in and out I felt like a crook. But anyway he didn't bark and he behaved very well. Then the next morning when we were about to leave we put him in a little suitcase—rather like this one of yours—and the man was taking out the luggage. Suddenly his eyes began to pop because the suitcase was rolling, the dog inside was moving and he saw the suitcase rolling down the hall corridor.

But we got to Warsaw and oh, my God, how depressing it was. It was almost totally leveled after Hitler's order to “wipe it out.” They estimated that 23% of the city was still there. Well that 23% was cellars, the foundations of houses, and a quarter of a house here, and a third of a house there. All the rest was rubble, and oh God, it was depressing. Ambassador Gallman was a delightfully nice man and a wonderful chief but he was rather a solitary. He and his wife didn't like people around, so Elsie and I had rather a lonely Christmas in these dreary surrounding.

In those days you still could see a few Poles, so we'd ask them to dinner—we had a tiny little apartment, it was very nice but tiny. The Chancery was in an old house and this was a little gate house or lodge to what had been a large house which was the Chancery. We'd have these Poles to dinner, and then they started arresting people right and left and I thought it was crazy to ask them any more. I'd meet them on the street and they'd say, “Why don't you invite us to dinner anymore?” I said, “Now look, be sensible, you know if you come to dinner with us you'll go to prison.” Being typically Polish, they'd say, “Well, its worth it. You give us good wine; you give us good food; Elsie plays the piano; you give us cigars; we have a wonderful time and its worth it.” They are so foolhardy, you know.

There was one man in the Foreign Office who was comparatively friendly. When Elsie was ill and had to leave, he said, “Oh, I'm so sorry to hear your wife is ill.” Those are the only kind words that any official Pole said to me in two years. We got one message while we were there which was rather disconcerting, from Elsie's father. It said, “The man whose wife is an artist has asked me to be head of Radio Free Europe.” The man was Dean

Acheson—Mrs. Acheson is an artist, as you know. And the Poles eventually found out about this and they said, “Oh, your father-in-law is trying to help form a government to take our place, isn't he?” It didn't make us feel too comfortable.

I'll tell you one odd thing: there were some Poles, aristocrats, who were not too upset with what was happening. Mary Radziwill, Princess Radziwill, had been very well off. Her husband had been killed by the Nazis. She was working as a secretary in the Embassy. She was living in one room, with three sons and we got to know her very well. I thought she was a bit foolish because she used to go out on picnics with us and what not. But she said, “They know I'm here working at the Embassy, and I'm supposed to report on everything you do. So they'll think I'm reporting.” In fact, since things have changed, she has come out to visit us here twice. But anyway, in those days she said, “You know, I must admit, I think the people are better off now than they were under us.” She was marvelous, she was really a saint.

Q: Their whole recovery was overtaken by world economic problems, I gather. Tell me...

LYON: Let me tell you about Herman Field.

Q: I was just going to ask you: can you recount the history of the disappearance of the Field family?

LYON: I was the one charged with trying to find Herman Field.

Q: It started with Noel, didn't it? Herman came, and then he disappeared.

LYON: Herman was the one that was supposed to have disappeared in Warsaw. Noel may have disappeared somewhere else. But Herman came to Warsaw and allegedly took a plane from Warsaw to Prague and that's all I could find out in the beginning. Then we checked with Prague, and there was no record of his having got off the plane there. They just couldn't find any record. And at one point the nice fellow in the Foreign Office whose

name escapes me—Wyansky, or something like that—said, “I think tomorrow I'm going to be able to give you the details of all this Field business.” And I said, “Oh, wonderful.” I went back the next day, and he wouldn't tell me a thing. They got just to the point of telling us something, and then they decided not to. We never could find out what on earth happened to him. But it's very easy to see how he could have disappeared because when you got into Warsaw—I remember the first time—you were taken from the plane into a room and the door was locked, and all the windows were covered with heavy curtains. When nobody was looking, I went up and peeked behind the curtains and there was a shade pulled down. I peeked behind the shade and there was another curtain. It was a very ere feeling.

We used to try to get out of Warsaw about every three months or we'd have gone crazy. Our children were at school in Switzerland so we had excuses to go. This particular time, I'd been there much more than three months and my nerves were very tense. We were going out, to pick up the kids and spend Christmas in Switzerland—they were at school in Lausanne, and we were going to Gstaad. I was sending Elsie out with all the skis and luggage, on our courier plane then I was going to follow on a commercial plane a few days later. We had to tell the Foreign Office who was going and coming on this courier plane, and I informed them that Elsie would be on board. I took her out to the airport. They used to take your luggage and stand it on a low rack, and then they'd put you in this room and lock you in. I said, “Goodbye darling.” The luggage was piled on the rack and she was put in the room. Just then a man came up and said, “We have no record of your wife going out on this plane.” I said, “Well I've made arrangements with the Foreign Office.” He said, “Well, they haven't told us.” So I said, “Can I telephone?” “Yes, the telephone is over there, about 100 yards across in another building.” And I walked there and telephoned. I got the lad in the Foreign Office, and he said, “Yes, its perfectly all right, I'll tell them.” And as I left that building I saw a black Maria drive off. And they'd been arresting French officials, attach#s, lower ranking people in various Embassies and putting them in jail. You never knew when your turn was coming and I thought, “My God, they've got Elsie.” And I got to the rack and the luggage had gone. I knocked on the door—I'd lost my head and

I shouldn't have done that—and I banged on the door. Nothing happened, and I pushed the door open with my shoulder. “Elsie?” “Yes, darling.” She was there. But it just shows the nervous state you get into. You used to be able to watch through a crack in the fence the people walk out from the locked room to the plane. But after Field disappeared they blocked that up so you couldn't watch.

Q: Didn't the Fields all reappear?

LYON: Yes, and they were all paid indemnities, I think, something like $100,000 each by the Soviet government, for having held them up for so long.

Q: There were three or four of them as I remember.

LYON: There was Herman, Noel and I think there was a wife.

Q: But why did they disappear? It's one of those Iron Curtain mysteries?

LYON: I don't know, but they both were in the Department, you know, they served in the Western European Division. Herman Field disappeared in Warsaw, Noel in Prague, if I recall correctly.

Q: Yes, I know. Was there any louche connection of any kind?

LYON: I would have thought there was, and I think they were accused of being CIA, but I don't think it ever came out that they were.I spent a lot of time trying to find out what happened to Herman. He was taken to the airport by a friend to take a plane to Prague. When the plane got to Prague he was not on it, nor on the manifest. At one point the Polish officials told me that in a few days they'd give me some very interesting information about Herman, but they clammed up.

Oh, I'll tell you one thing that happened when we were in Warsaw. Our family had taken some leave in Switzerland. I went back to Warsaw, leaving Elsie and the kids in Zurich.

Then Gallman went off on leave to the States, and just then the Korean War broke out. It's the only time I saw Polish people smiling and cheering in Warsaw. They thought the fire would spread around the world and they'd be freed. I was rather terrified. I quickly telephoned Elsie and told her not to come back and to wait it out, because I didn't want her there if we were caught. And I thought, “Oh, my Lord, we'll all be interned and I'll be the leader, and I'm going to have to look brave.

Q: Wasn't there any realization on the part of the Poles that the whole balloon might go up at this point?

LYON: That's what they hoped.

Q: Even after their previous experience?

LYON: Oh yes, anything to be free again. For example, I attended the installation of Cardinal Vishinsky. It was held in the church of the Visatec, a tiny church but the only one left. All the others were destroyed. It was when he was installed as Primate of Poland, and the Polish government did everything they could to prevent people from going. They gave them free tickets to theaters, to concerts and everything, to try and draw the people away. But I got to the square where it was, and it was absolutely jammed with people. I got to my seat in the church, which was way up front, and that whole crowd of people came in—all 100,000 or whatever—to try to get into the church which was about twice as wide as this room and twice as long, all singing “Poland will be free again.” The rafters shook, the walls bulged and I thought the whole damn church was going to come down. I thought if it does, I'll get to heaven on the coattails of the cardinal. And then he held up his hand—well, there were just too many—and they turned and slowly withdrew. It was really most impressive.

Q: What was the relation of the church and the government then? Obviously they're much better now than they were then.

LYON: Yes, but the government didn't dare move in. I've never seen anything like it.

Q: So the church was able to put pressure on the government?

LYON: Yes, it was strong. I think the government felt, if it comes to a question of people choosing between the church and the state, they'll choose the church. I used to go down to Krakow to see Cardinal Sapieha. He was the logical one to become the primate because Vishinsky was younger. Vishinsky had been his prot#g#. I used to go down to Krakow. Oh God, we'd be followed everywhere we went; we had a little motorcar following us with the equivalent of the KGB in it. When I got there, I'd stay in the local hotel and a man would be sleeping outside my door watching for what I was going to do. I'd have an awful time trying to evade him when I went to see the Cardinal, because the Cardinal used to give me a lot of good political advice. And one day I said to him, “You know, I hope I don't cause you any harm.” He said, “No, not at all. I've told them that I won't ever talk politics with foreigners, and they know I don't.” But he did for the whole hour I was there. He was a most valiant man. During the occupation of the Germans in Krakow he went to say mass in the cathedral once, and the Nazi troops wouldn't let him in. So the crowd picked up his motorcar with him in it and carried the motorcar into the cathedral and he said mass.

Q: They really are terrific people, the Poles.

LYON: Oh, they're fantastic. Of course, they're really crazy in a way, but they're marvelous.

Q: Yes, I would say they're the most troublesome of any of the people in that part of the Soviet empire.

LYON: They don't give a damn, they're foolhardy. But you can't help but like them.

Q: Were the Poles aware of Soviet atrocities...about Stalin's crimes, and the Katyn forest, and all that, when you were there? Or did that come later?

LYON: I think that came later. But we used to visit sometimes some of the Nazi concentration camps. I think the Poles knew about them but they were careful not to talk about it.

Q: That's the German thing. I was thinking about Stalin. That, of course, didn't really come out until Khrushchev started talking. But then the Poles must have been aware of it.

LYON: You never know. When I was in Berlin we had an awfully nice young chauffeur and I said something to him about, “Oh, was it awfully hard, did you have enough to eat?” He said, “You mean to eat horse or dog or something? I never heard of anything so terrible.” I said, “You've never heard of anything so terrible? What about all these people that the Nazis slaughtered?” He said, “You know, I never heard of it while it was going on.” I don't know whether he was telling me the truth or not but I think he was sincere. I guess they really didn't know what was going on too much, the people, until they began to be bombed.

One thing that moved me very much: we went to Weinsut which was the Potocki's big palace. You know, 17 drawing rooms, and 16 dining rooms. They took a whole train load of stuff out of the country; they were able to get it out with the connivance of the Germans, I think. But I went into a bedroom, and there on the door frame, written in pencil, it said Carlos or whatever his name was, or Adolphe or Pierre—you know the way we all do as kids grow up and we put the little marks showing how they've grown. It was very touching. It made me sort of weepy.

When I was transferred from Warsaw I was assigned to the National War College as a student. Waldy Gallman, who'd been the Ambassador in Warsaw, was assigned to the War College as the State Department representative. So the Poles were more convinced than they'd ever been that we were both spies. At the end of the course, which was extremely interesting as you know—you went to the War College yourself—we had to write a long paper each year. And I chose the Vatican as a power in international relations because everywhere I'd been, the Nuncio, or the Vatican people, were about as well

informed as any of the diplomats—in fact more informed. And because they had so many contacts with the people through churches in various countries, they were really of great help to us. In making my research about the Vatican I came across a story which I liked.

When Ribbentrop was making a visit to Rome, he insisted upon seeing the Pope. And the Pope, who I think was Pius XII, didn't want to see him but he finally felt he had to. And when he did see him he gave Ribbentrop a whole list of Nazi atrocities hoping to make him squirm. When he got through he went out to Cardinal Maglione, who was sitting in the outer office and said, “Well, I told him everything. I hope God will open his eyes.” And Maglione, who was a nice Italian wit said, “Let us hope, Holy Father, that God will close his eyes.”

Q: Then Berlin, 1950 to 1954. Right?

LYON: Needless to say, a most interesting time to be there. At the War College, when I was told that I was going to Berlin, Elbridge Durbrow telephoned me and said, “We don't usually ask people whether they're prepared to go to such and such a post. But as you have just come from an Iron Curtain country and we want to send you back behind the Curtain, I thought I ought to talk to you.” I said, “Oh, Lord. Its awfully hard on Elsie, and awfully hard on the children,” and I started making all sorts of excuses why we shouldn't go. He said, “It's Berlin.” I said, “Oh, that's different, I'd love to go to Berlin, and Elsie will be delighted because when we went there on a holiday she said, 'I'd love to be assigned there.'” So off we went.

Before we left Mr. McCloy, who was High Commissioner, came to the States on consultation and naturally he wanted to look me over to see whether he wanted me because I was to run his office in Berlin. The High Commissioner then lived in Bonn—he had moved from Berlin. We talked for a while and I didn't know how it was going until at the end he said, “You'll like Berlin, Lyon; its a windy corner.” He had a wonderful way of phrasing things. We had terrible unemployment during my term in Berlin. We were always

trying to reduce the unemployment, and get the factories going. One day we were having a consultation and McCloy said, “You know, there's one fellow who could settle this thing with one arm tied behind his back. As a matter of fact he's got both arms tied behind his back. It's Speer in Spandau.”

Spandau is interesting. Each month it would be under the charge of one of the four powers, and when the Russians were in charge the prisoners lost weight. When we were in charge they gained weight. During the month we were in charge the Commandant was supposed to go out and make a tour; he did it once or twice but then he got me to do it, most of the time. It was fascinating because in those days in Spandau were Admiral Doenitz; Walter Funk, the Nazi Economic Minister; Admiral Raeder, Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy; von Neurath, who had been Foreign Minister; von Shirach, Hitler's Youth leader; Albert Speer, and Rudolph Hess, last but not least. They were, of course, completely cut off from the world; they weren't allowed any newspapers; they weren't allowed any books to speak of; and nobody was supposed to speak to them; they weren't supposed to hear anything. Each one lived in a little cell about 4 feet by 8 feet, but it was extraordinary how each of the inmates had impressed on that cell his character. The cell of Hess, for example, was all higgledy-piggledy. The bed was never made, and clothes were thrown on the floor; it was a mess. Admiral Doenitz's cell was all military precision, brushes lined up carefully just so, his blanket folded very correctly, very precisely. The only cell that had a human touch was that of Speer. In Speer's he had a picture of his family. He also had a drawing of a house and I asked him what that was. He said, “That's my dream house.” He was an architect, you will recall. He said, “I'm going to build that when I get out of here.” And I thought to myself, “Poor devil, you're never going to get out of here,” but he did. He lived not only to get out but long enough to build his dream house, and to write two books.

Q: That's right, a very interesting book. It's a revelation to see what chaos there was in the Reich and how inefficient the efficient Germans really were.

LYON: I thought in normal life I would have liked Speer. Anyway, it was really ridiculous, as you say, having that huge prison for just these seven inmates but we never could get the Russians to put them in a smaller place. We had to have a platoon out there each month we were in charge. They had any number of guards and cooks and it was really, I thought, a terrible waste. The Russians were very difficult, if somebody got ill we had a terrible time trying to get permission to take them out and put them in a hospital. Eventually they yielded but they were very difficult.

As you know, one by one the prisoners either died or were let out having served their long terms, except Hess who was living there alone up until about a year ago when he died.

Q: Who sat on the Kommandatura after the Russians walked out and started administering their own zone?

LYON: By the time I got there it was just the French, the British, and ourselves, the Russians having walked out.

Q: It was a total boycott?

LYON: Oh yes, they never came over. Very often the Commandants themselves wouldn't participate in the weekly meeting and their deputies—I being the American deputy—would. My first British colleague was a fellow called Tenant, and the Frenchman was de Noblet. De Noblet was followed by Francois de Margerie and Tenant by Michael Rose who became a very close friend, who we've seen over the years. The French were always trying to put the Germans in their place, put them down, and the British and the U.S. were always trying to loosen things up a little bit.

Q: For the French, it was the Francois-Poncet-tradition.

LYON: When I first got there, Ernst Reuter was the mayor. He was the most wonderful man. He had been arrested by the Nazis, he'd been put in prison. The British Labor Party

and the French parties persuaded Hitler to let him out of prison but Hitler exiled him to Italy and he spent the war in Turkey. Then he came back to Berlin and he was a most marvelous man. I once told him that he gave too much of himself in addition to all the work he did, by going to all the parties that the Allies gave. He said, “But I have to, for Berlin.” And he said, “Nobody ever died of overwork.” But he did. He also had a Senator for Reconstruction called Paul Hertz who had been in the Reichstag. The Nazis came in to arrest him one day but he got out the back door, and went to the States. He was absolutely selfless and devoted to the rebuilding of Berlin, and he gave his whole life to that and did a wonderful job.

Q: Reuter was really gung-ho on reunification, wasn't he?

LYON: Oh, absolutely. He said to me, “Lyon, this division is against nature, its against history, its un-Christian and if you Allies don't help us overcome it, we one day will take matters in our own hands and obtain unification without your help.” I think, had he lived, he undoubtedly would have been Chancellor one day and he might have worked something out, I don't know.

Q: That would really have put the fat in the fire.

LYON: It might have.

Q: Was this zeal shared by other Berliners, or couldn't they care less?

LYON: Oh, yes, but they were terribly courageous, as you know. They wouldn't give in to...

Q: No, I mean the zeal for reunification.

LYON: Oh, absolutely, yes, because so many of their families were over on the other side. This was before the wall so they could get back and forth, but the West Berliners didn't dare go there very much because they were scared they'd be arrested or put in jail. But a lot of East Berliners used to come over on the U-Bahn and do some shopping and then

go back. In those days you would say, “Oh, just look at the contrast between East and West Berlin,” because East Berlin was still very much in rubble except the Stalinallee, the main street; they'd done the facades on that. But Elsie and I went back to Berlin last June (1988); we went over to East Berlin and it's extraordinary what they've done. You still can say, “Look at the contrast,” and it isn't the thriving busy place that West Berlin is, but it's still pretty well coming back to life.

Q: Well, the Germans, you know, they're very efficient people.

LYON: I said that Ernst Reuter died of overwork. He used to make a point of driving on the Autobahn, getting out to West Germany to Bonn and Hamburg and what not. He'd say he had to do this to prove that they still could do it, to keep the appearances, and keep the route open. And one day he started off. He had started out for Hamburg. He had a cold and I think he got as far as Hamburg and then he was turned back because he didn't have his permit. So he had two hours going and two hours back to get his permit. Then he went off again and he caught a worse cold, and he got pneumonia and died.

We happened to be out of Germany at the time but we came rushing back for his funeral. His funeral was a most impressive thing. I went back to Berlin a few years later and there's just a simple grave with his name and the dates of his birth and death. Even then—that was oh, ten or fifteen years after his death—while I was there a couple came and put flowers on the grave, and you could see that other people had been continually putting flowers there. He was a wonderful man. I thought the world of him.

But, as I say, the French were always trying to discipline him and particularly, when we were in the chair. (The chair of the Kommandatura rotated.) On one occasion the French were particularly adamant about something he did, and they asked us to talk to him, speak to him. I was delegated to go over and talk to him, and I said, “Mr. Mayor, when you want to you have such charm you can charm birds off trees. Be a little nicer to your French colleagues.” And he sort of smiled and mumbled something. A few months or weeks

later, he was going to the States on a visit. Just before that the refugees started coming over in hordes from East Berlin. He telephoned me—he called me, I don't know why, I guess it was easy for him to talk to me—he said, “Berlin, the free island in this Red sea is sinking under the weight of these refugees. You've got to help me get some planes to get them out to West Germany.” So we got him some planes. Then, with true German efficiency, they were making great lists of everybody, and carefully documenting them. And the planes didn't get used for two or three days. From Wiesbaden (our air base), they were calling up and saying, “For goodness sake, send those planes back.” So I went to see the Mayor and I said, “You've got to get things moving.” I said, “When you get to the States, you're not going to have a very good reception.” He said, “When I get to the States I'll charm, I'll charm—I'll charm apples off trees.”

Q: Let's clear up something else. You were Deputy to General Mathewson and to Commissioner McCloy.

LYON: Right.

Q: What were the respective responsibilities of the Commissioner and the Commandant?

LYON: The Commandant, needless to say, was in command of the troops, but he also was actually the head of...

Q: Troops in Berlin?

LYON: In Berlin, the commander of the American troops in Berlin.

Q: But not anywhere else.

LYON: Not anywhere else, no, not in West Germany. And, of course, McCloy was High Commissioner for the whole country. And in spite of the Russians trying to ease us out of Berlin over and over again, we insisted that Berlin was part of Western Germany, and the

day eventually came when the Reichstag met in the old Reichstag building much to the annoyance of the Soviets.

I was head of the civilian office of McCloy in Berlin and they called me Deputy Commandant because I was also the Political Adviser to General Mathewson, the Commandant. I don't know whether that's very clear but that's the way it was.

Q: In that connection, what was the effect of the Marshall Plan on people in Berlin, on the Berliners? It was just getting going when you were there.

LYON: Well, I guess we got aid to get things working in Berlin as far as I recall, but we didn't have a Marshall Plan man in Berlin. There was an AID representative in Bonn with the High Commissioner. As I say, this unemployment was a terrible thing.

Q: Was the Marshall Plan a factor in the Russians leaving the Kommandatura in Berlin, or why did they walk out?

LYON: They left the Allied Control Council in March 1948, while Congress was considering the Marshall Plan and just after the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia. Then right after the occupying powers and Benelux reached agreement in June about the European Recovery Program and political and monetary institutions for West Germany, the Soviet representative walked out of the Four Power Kommandatura in Berlin, and at the end of June, they started the Berlin blockade.

Q: So they had already walked out by the time you came to Berlin.

LYON: Oh, yes,

Q: Then it must have been related to the Marshall Plan, the set-up in West Germany, and the Czech disaster.

LYON: The Soviets were very difficult to deal with in Berlin, as you know. As I recall it was also connected with the rate of exchange.

Q: And there was no Soviet participation, even at the deputy level?

LYON: Very little. The little participation we had came with the case of the Steinstuecken Enclave. That was one of the very few times I ever came in touch with the Russians. It was a part of the U.S. Sector, a little enclave about 200 yards from West Berlin, in the Soviet Zone. I think there were about 20 or 30 families who lived there. They used to walk across the grass to West Berlin to the places where they were employed. One day the Russians moved their troops in and stopped people going back and forth. We did everything we could to try and get the Russians to pull their troops back but they wouldn't hear of it. We were sending messages and talking at lower levels with them. We could have sent our own troops and driven them out, but like so many things in those days, we were terrified that if we did the balloon would go up, we'd get into a real row. Finally it came to the point where we had to do something. My Commandant, General Mathewson, invited the Russian Commandant, General Nordiko I think was his name—to come and talk about this matter. The General came. We had a green baize table, and the Russian General sat opposite my General. I was next to General Mathewson, with an interpreter on his other side. Opposite the Russian Commandant his Deputy and an interpreter—all very formal. General Mathewson said, “I won't talk about this at all until you tell me you've given orders for the troops to be withdrawn.” The Russian turned to his Deputy and went mumble-mumble and looked at us and didn't say anything. Mathewson pulled out his watch and he said, “It's now quarter to six. Unless you can tell me that by six o'clock you have given orders for your troops to be pulled back, I won't talk.” More mumble-mumble. And finally Mathewson said, “Have you given the orders?” And the Russian Commandant said, “Da.” And the Deputy Commandant said, “Nyet.” So Mathewson looked at me: “What do we do now?” I made a gesture of tossing a coin. We went on, and we talked and we talked, and

finally they withdrew their troops. But I think its a perfect example of how the Russians handle things. One says “Da” and the other says “Nyet”—take your choice.

Q: What happened to that little enclave when they put up the wall, do you know?

LYON: That was quite a bit after I had left Berlin so I'm not absolutely sure but I believe the wall didn't go around that part, it just went through Berlin. But it was rather funny that if we played golf in our sector and we sliced, we'd be in the Russian zone, and we couldn't recover our sliced balls.

We also had an incident about a memorial the Russians had erected, before the walkout (from the Kommandatura) in our Sector. It was a Russian tank on a stone base. The West Berliners kept nicking and chipping at it. We asked the Russians to remove it to prevent further damage. They refused. So General Mathewson had a wire cage built over it. This infuriated the Russians and they demanded that the cage be removed. We refused and in due course the Russians dismantled the monument and carted it away.

The next really important thing that happened while I was in Berlin was the uprising in East Berlin, June 17th, 1953. That was really a very scary time. You probably recall those photographs of boys throwing stones at tanks, the Russian tanks. We were terrified that the whole thing might blow up. Our one worry was to prevent West Berliners from charging over to help their colleagues on the other side. Because then the Russian troops would have fired on them. We would have had to send our troops to protect them. And really, the fat would have been in the fire as you've said. So we worried and were in constant telephone contact with Bonn and with Washington. All the Commandants, French, American and British, agreed that we should just try and calm people down and not let any West Berliners go over. It eventually simmered down. The Russian troops came in, and they got control of the situation. We thought we'd done pretty well, we thought we'd avoided World War III, but something was published in the press which burned me up and I remember it until today. Some American correspondent said that the American

Commandant and Deputy Commandant didn't know this thing was going to happen, and when it did happen, they didn't know what to do. But, of course, you have to have these little foul blows every now and then in our life.

Q: Washington was helpful in this case?

LYON: Oh, very helpful, but the one thing they wanted us to try and do was calm them down. Schreiber had already become mayor and I think it was a blessing, because, if Reuter had still been there, I think we would have had an awful time controlling him but Schreiber was easier to control.

Elsie loved Berlin because she did a great deal of work with refugees, helping them, and she also had a lot of music. We had Kammermusik music in the house, and there was a Berlin orchestra under Furtwangler. She really loved it, she was never scared either. But it was a place that did get on your nerves.

Q: I might just ask you if there was a change in tone after Acheson left and Dulles took over? I mean with respect to Berlin. You were there until '54, weren't you?

LYON: Yes, and when did Dulles come in, '52?

Q: The election was '52, Dulles took over in '53 then.

LYON: The only time I remember Dulles coming to Berlin was for the Four Power Conference which was held there with Eden, Bidault, and Gromyko.

Q: And what happened with Dulles?

LYON: Well, I was taken out just before that happened but I remember, when we were arranging with the Russians for the meeting, Michael Rose, my British colleague, said, “Excuse me,” and he left the room. When he came back he whispered to me, “I just threw up.” He was so nervous talking to the Russians.

Q: I don't think I have anything more on Berlin.

LYON: I did mention to you that Acheson came there to dedicate one of the new buildings of the Free University in Berlin, and he stayed with us as a matter of fact. And just two days before he got there they discovered an unexploded bomb from the war where they were going to put the cornerstone that he was to dedicate. It hadn't gone off and it might not have gone off, but still it was rather worrying.

You may recall that during these years that I was in Berlin, Senator McCarthy was playing havoc with the State Department. Poor Sam Reber, who was Counselor in Bonn was one of the sufferers, and he resigned from the Service rather than having to go up and face it. I always felt that our seniors in the State Department didn't do anything to defend us. We felt that we were out on the firing line with nobody to back us up. I was interested that Mayor Reuter, a German who lived under the Nazis, but at least he stood up to them, said to me, “I think you Americans are displaying a lack of moral courage,” referring to McCarthy, which I found something pretty hard to take from a German. But, as I mentioned earlier, Reuter did show moral courage when he was arrested by the Nazis.

While we were in Berlin, Adlai Stevenson came on a visit. He wanted to go over into East Berlin, which was just after the uprising there, and I was taking him. He'd been given a lunch by the foreign press in Berlin and they all accompanied us to Checkpoint Charlie, and then they all said, “Well, we'll see you in Siberia,” as we went scuttling off into the Soviet Sector. Stevenson wanted to see Hitler's bunker and we drew up to it in two black limousines, such as diplomats always move around in. There were a lot of young men, almost boys, Russian soldiers there. These poor young kids didn't know what it was all about, these young Russians soldiers. As we got out of the car, Stevenson had with him an editor of Newsweek—I've forgotten his name—and he whipped out a camera and started taking pictures. And I said, “Please don't do that. These young kids are bewildered by our coming anyway, we'll only get in trouble. They'll probably do something silly.” They walked on ahead, Stevenson and this Newsweek man, and I explained the situation to

the wife of the Newsweek man. I said, “These young boys are so surprised to see these big black limousines draw up.” And I was sure Stevenson and the Newsweek man would say, “Those damn stuffy State Department people.” The others went on a little bit ahead of us and I suddenly came upon them. They'd already been surrounded by the soldiers, and we were carted off to the police post. I spent about an hour on the telephone trying to get us released, and we were finally released, and all the press were waiting when we got to Checkpoint Charlie. Stevenson, of course, was delighted, because when it all got out in the American papers, it gave him a lot of publicity. I knew that the boys in the State Department were all saying, “That damn fool Lyon, why did he let Stevenson do this?” But it all ended quite all right. So with that I think I'm prepared to leave Berlin and go back to the State Department.

Q: Which you did in 1954. McCarthyism was at flood tide when you came back. I remember the Department was totally immobilized during the television thing. You couldn't find anybody at their desks. Everybody was down in Lincoln White's office. You didn't have television everywhere in those days. They all went down to the press room to watch these hearings. Anyway, go ahead.

LYON: It was a terribly sad period in our country's history. This was also the period when George Kennan came out of Russia to go on leave, and he made the statement comparing life in Moscow to that of being in Germany in the time of the Nazis. He stayed with us, and his wife Annelise, who'd been in Western Germany having a baby, met him there. They both stayed in our house. Earlier I had gone out to meet his plane. And that's where he made that statement, the one that got him declared persona non grata by Moscow.

Q: In Berlin?

LYON: Yes, he made it to the press in Berlin. Of course the Soviets were looking for an excuse to get rid of him. You didn't remember that?

Q: Oh, I remember it very well. I never understood how he allowed himself such an outburst.

LYON: I don't know either. He was a trained diplomat and we all knew he was a superb diplomat.

Q: Apparently he didn't give much of a damn about public relations back in the U.S.

LYON: I asked his wife Annelise about this, and she said, “You know, if I'd been there, George would never have said that.” She said, “Unfortunately, when he went to Moscow, there was such high hope for his going—that he'd be able to straighten things out, he knew them so well—and when he got there I had to leave and, strangely enough, it was so much worse than he realized. I would have thought he would have realized, but he apparently didn't. And he was left alone there. He was alone in that big residence and he was nervous and tense—he got terribly nervous and tense.” She said, “If I'd been there and kept him sort of calm he never would have said this.” And I think that's true. I think somehow though the Russians would have probably found some way to get rid of him because he was so astute. He knew them so well that they couldn't get away with much.

Q: You spoke in your book, when you came back to German Affairs, about the feeling in Dulles's office and other places that the Service was overstaffed.

LYON: I'm not sure he felt the whole Service was overstaffed but GER had been a rather special division under Jimmy Riddleberger. It was equivalent, more or less, to one of the geographical divisions. And they were cutting it down to size, just as we were cutting down the occupation forces in Germany. I had the unpleasant job of trying to reduce this office from a rather overgrown bureaucracy to a more normal thing. Because, you see, we were then taken in under Western Europe. We were a part of the Division of Western Europe, of which Livingston Merchant was the head. I remember, shortly after I got there, I had to go to some staff meeting with Dulles and I didn't know Dulles very well then. In fact I

hardly knew him at all. And I said, “Livy, he scares the living daylights out of me.” And Livy Merchant said, “He does all of us too.” Which is rather funny because Dulles had always treated Livy more or less as a son. Livy was very close to him and traveled with him everywhere he went, but—”He scares us all too.”

I wasn't very long in German affairs, and as I say, most of my work was trying to cut it down to size.

Q: Can I stop you there for a minute? Wasn't this the period when Dulles and Adenauer were writing to each other?

LYON: Oh! That I wanted to tell you. It's one of the few useful things I did in my Foreign Service career. Dulles hardly knew Adenauer, and I suddenly thought what a good idea it would be to ease things by having him write a personal letter every now and then to Adenauer about some problem or other. I ended up by making them practically pen pals. About every week I'd send a draft letter up to the Secretary, and then Adenauer would respond. He and Adenauer became very palsy-walsy. I remember when Adenauer came to Washington and he came to the Department for the first time. I went down with the Secretary to meet him at the entrance of the State Department, and we rode up in the elevator, neither of them saying a word. They were really very similar in a way. And Dulles said, “Tell the Chancellor that I think he's reached his advanced years in such good condition because he doesn't waste time on small talk.” I did translate it but I thought, “Oh, my God, that's exactly like the Secretary himself.” These two men—Adenauer spoke no English, Dulles spoke no German—they'd make grunts and nod their heads. And in some unknown way they communicated with each other. This went on over the years, and they became very close. Thank God they did.

Q: Do you think Dulles understood him in the same way that General de Gaulle did, for example?

LYON: That's a very good question. I thought the de Gaulle-Adenauer thing was marvelous, didn't you? I mean, its what made the whole change in Europe and I think they both worked very hard on it. Dulles was a very intelligent man. I think he was a very shy man, which I don't believe most people realize. He was so different from his brother, Allen, who was the head of the CIA, who was outgoing and charming and everything. Eleanor, the sister, who worked for me in German Affairs, was sort of a mixture of the two. She was much more outgoing than “brother Foster,” as she always used to say, and less charming than Allen. But you know, they were a funny family. Eleanor had this little house out in McLean, Virginia and it had a swimming pool. And I always remember her telling me that she had Allen and Foster and their respective wives, for lunch—at Christmas, I think it was—and Foster said to Allen, “How about a dip in the pool?” a challenge, and he and Foster both plunged into the pool on Christmas day.

Q: Yes, that was on Christmas day, an icy day. I remember hearing about that.

LYON: You remember that the Secretary used to go up to some island, way up in the Thousand Islands, and live a very rustic life. I didn't know him intimately at all but I got to know him a little bit. Occasionally, I remember being on a plane going somewhere with him, and Mrs. Dulles would always prepare the bourbon before dinner, and he'd sit there and drink his bourbon. I always thought he did a lot of that traveling, which was criticized, going hither and yon so much, in order to get away from the pressure of the State Department. It gave him a few days when he wasn't under tremendous pressure. And then, of course, Kissinger carried that out to perfection. He was always in the air somewhere.

Q: They set a bad precedent. I guess it was Woodrow Wilson who really started it when he walked up the gangplank of the George Washington, but never mind that.

LYON: I think they shouldn't spend so much time away, myself.

Q: How did you get from there back into Latin American Affairs?

LYON: Well, while I was in Western Europe, when I was running German affairs, an Assistant Secretary of State called Henry Holland asked—I don't know how he even knew about me, but probably some of the old Latin American hands who knew me suggested it—he asked if I'd go as Ambassador to Honduras. And I said, “Would I!” because even though Honduras wasn't very big or anything terribly important, it was an Embassy and you know we all like being Ambassadors. Well, that fell through. Then he asked me if I'd come and be Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American affairs. And I hadn't told Livy much, just that I was going as Ambassador to Honduras. I was hoping Livy would say, “No, no, no, we want you to go as Ambassador somewhere else in Europe,” but he didn't. So I went back to American Republics Affairs. Holland told me that he liked to have a fellow along as his Deputy for a year or so, get to know him, get to know his ways, and then shoot him off somewhere as Ambassador. And that's exactly what happened.

I hadn't been there many days when he took me out to the conference in San Francisco about the United Nations and Dulles was there, of course. While I had been in Western European Affairs, Dulles had come back from a trip to Europe, and he'd briefed all of us in Western Europe about his views on communism, and what communism was doing to the world, and where things were going. It was absolutely superb. So I said to Holland, “The Latin Americans at the San Francisco conference are feeling neglected, as they usually are.” I mean people were more interested in Europe. So I suggested that the Secretary talk to them the way he did to us in EUR about communism, how he saw it and how he saw the future. And the Secretary sort of reluctantly, did. He didn't particularly want to bother with the Latinos, he never did. But his briefing went over with a bang. I mean the Latinos were very flattered that he took the time and it all went beautifully.

Q: Wasn't it during this period that the Guatemala business was going on?

LYON: Yes.

Q: Were you in ARA during that time?

LYON: As I recall, we asked Norman Armour, who'd retired, to go back as Ambassador to Guatemala to help straighten things out. And Norman said, “Yes.” He'd been Ambassador in the Argentine, and Ambassador in Spain. He said, “You know, the older I get, the smaller my posts get, and if I go on like this I'll end up by being Vice Consul in Andorra.” I later thought of that myself, when I went from Ambassador to Minister to Consul General. I might have ended up as Vice Consul if I'd lived long enough.

Q: I was wondering if you have anything to say about Arbenz, and what I always regarded as a fiasco in Guatemala. I think we owe a lot of our subsequent troubles in Central America to that affair.

LYON: I'm afraid it's all faded back into the dim background. I don't remember much about it.

Q: Well, you've already told us what it was like to go back to Chile. Had there really been any great change in the basic setup there since your first assignment?

LYON: Well now, as I told you before, things had got worse.

Q: Was Chile in the late 1950s really any different much from the “underdevelopeds” of the '80s? I mean wasn't there inflation, international debt, attempts to impose austerity and so on. It was a sort of forerunner, wasn't it, of the general problem in Latin America?

LYON: Yes, but you see, it was like so many Latin American countries were then. Chile has changed now. Chile was a two product country, nitrate and copper, and when the price of copper was up everything was hunky-dory, and when the price of nitrate was up everything was hunky-dory. When they went down, everything went to pot. And in addition to that, Chile was constantly being hit by earthquakes. Its a lovely country. I loved Chile and I loved the Chileans, almost my second country—or third, I'll put France next. But they

always seem to have some trouble; I don't know whether I talked to you about when they had the great earthquake about a year after I got there...

Q: That was during your first assignment, wasn't it?

LYON: Oh, yes, that's right. Before that earthquake Ambassador Armour had made plans to go to the States to see his doctor, as he had not been feeling well. When the earthquake struck he didn't feel he ought to leave Chile but his wife insisted that he should go to the States. There he made several speeches and the U.S. sent plane loads of supplies, Red Cross etc. to help Chile. Later when he was transferred to the Argentine the Chilean papers said that without a thought for himself, he had dashed up to Washington and got help. So you never know how things are going to work out in your life.

One thing was a little amusing: my presentation of credentials, when I arrived in Chile.

Q: This is on the second round.

LYON: This is the second round when I was the botschafte. They had horse drawn carriages that picked you up and drove you to the Moneda, which was the presidential palace. It wasn't very far from the Chancery, where they picked me up, but there's a big square to go through, and as I drove around the square I heard someone yelling, “Viva Ambassador, viva Ambassador de Los Estados Unidos!” And I thought, “Aha, I'm quite a fellow here, I'm pretty well liked.” It was a friend of mine called Hernan Prieto. And I went on a little further and another one yelled out, “Ya, Yankee, viva, viva Embajador Leon,” and it was another friend in the crowd; they were just pulling my leg.

Q: Carefully planned.

LYON: But then, I guess, we talked about the inflation. We got this Klein-Sachs Mission to come to Chile. We got the inflation from 168% to 98% the first year and to 68% the next year. And then I left.

Q: Was the U.S. Government giving aid to Chile or was this a combination of private investment and government aid?

LYON: Well, we were holding off giving aid. They wanted aid and they thought, as I told you, that I could just wave a wand and get it because I was an “old boy”. But we were holding off because, until Chile straightened out its financial situation under instructions from the Export-Import Bank and the International Bank for Settlements and all those things, they wouldn't give aid. Then when inflation came down, we started giving aid again, not nearly as much as they wanted but probably enough under the circumstances.

It was very hard to get the Chileans to tighten their belts. Physically parts of Chile had prospered during it. For example, Santiago had grown enormously in the fifteen years between my assignments to Chile. On my return I was struck by the entirely new areas of suburbs surrounding the capital. Hundreds and hundreds of attractive new houses but far too much of the progress and population centered in Santiago.

You mentioned something about Bill Bullitt. He came down to Chile while I was there and I had him stay with me, but I won't go into that. I'll tell you later if you think its worth recording. It was, at times, unpleasant, because he'd become a very bitter man by that time, but always interesting.

Q: Now tell me about your assignment to Paris and what was going on there when you arrived. It was a pretty exciting time, '58.

LYON: It certainly was. And I think the nearly six or seven years that we were there, were not only the most interesting but the most stimulating, the happiest years of my whole career.

Just before I leave Chile...I've been reminded of something I think slightly amusing. Secretary Dulles administered the oath when I was made Ambassador to Chile and my father-in-law, Mr. Grew, was present. And Dulles said, “Lyon, a lot of people think you're

too young to be an Ambassador but as you've lived in the shadow of your distinguished father-in-law, we think its probably all right. You've gained knowledge from him." And I couldn't resist saying, "Mr. Secretary, to paraphrase Mark Twain, the rumor of my youth is grossly exaggerated." Actually I was 53 years old, which wasn't all that young. When I was in Paris and President Kennedy came upon the scene, and he was appointing all his peers and didn't want old Ambassadors, I suddenly got too old to be an Ambassador again.

I had thought that, when we got back to Chile, Elsie would love it. She hadn't been well, and I thought the change and everything would give her a shot in the arm. But it didn't. She wasn't at all well, so, as often happens when you get the thing you have longed for many times, it wasn't all that gratifying. I was worried about her and after about two years—she'd gone home to see the doctors—I got a telephone call from Loy Henderson. He said, "You've always said you'd rather be Minister in London than an Ambassador anywhere." I said, "Yes, and its still true." And he said, "Well, we can't send you to London but what about Paris?" I said, "Paris! Whoopee! I'd love it." He said, "What about Elsie?" And I said, "I know she'd love it too." He said, "Call her up and call me back tomorrow morning." Well I tried to get Elsie but she was staying with her mother: "Oh, Elsie has gone to bed and we can't disturb her." I told my mother-in-law the important news, but that didn't impress Mrs. Grew, so I never got through to Elsie. But I got Loy, and, naturally, I accepted. I thought Paris would also give Elsie a shot in the arm, with the shops and I knew she loved Paris and getting some nice French clothes, and the music and the opera and everything. It would really cure her. So I came back and we started off. I, of course, consulted with the Secretary on my way through. And I remember his saying to me, "You know, Lyon, I don't know what the ranking thing is, Minister to Paris, or Ambassador in Chile..." I don't remember the word he used but I said, "I don't care, sir. I think, wherever we are, the most important thing is the work, and I think the work in Paris will be terribly interesting and I also love Paris." He said, "So do I." And then he said, "I think we're going to have more problems with France in the next few years than with any country we've had since the war." He was very astute and he also said...

Q: This was still in the period of the Fourth Republic?

LYON: Yes. But he also said, “Keep an eye out for that fellow de Gaulle.” Of course, as you know, de Gaulle was then living down in Colombey les-Deux-Eglises, ostensibly out of things. One reason I was sent to Paris was that we had a political appointee there, and Charlie Yost, who was one of the most brilliant Foreign Service Officers, was Minister. He was holding the hand of Amory Houghton, who couldn't have been a nicer man or more intelligent.

Q: What time of year was it, do you remember when you arrived? It was just before the May crisis.

LYON: It was March, 1958 and, if you recall, de Gaulle returned to power in May, 1958. It was still the Fourth Republic; governments were falling after a couple of weeks. I think Churchill made the remark, “Oh, the situation in France was terrible, they had one government after another. It was such a bore I had a stroke.” Well anyway, Ambassador Houghton met me at the airport very kindly, and drove me to Paris. He'd never seen me before in his life, he'd taken me on sheer faith and assurances from others. I later learned, many, many years afterwards, that it was David Bruce who'd suggested that I go, and I must say I am eternally grateful to him.

Some people thought, “Oh, my goodness, he must have done something terrible in Chile, from having been Ambassador to go to Minister, No. 2 in Paris.” And the Chileans didn't understand it, in fact they were a little bit annoyed. And the Foreign Minister said to me, “We can't understand why you're going to Paris as Minister. We understand that your predecessor there has gone as Ambassador to Syria, a country from which we receive immigrants.” And I said to him, “In the Foreign Service you go where you're told. Its like the Army and you just do it.” I didn't tell him that secretly I was simply delighted to go. There was also the fact that my salary was going to be reduced by about $7,000 a year. But anyway, I was so happy to be in Paris that I didn't give that a thought. As I say, Mr.

Houghton didn't know me from Adam but he was a very nice man. He didn't speak French. He had an impediment with his speech so that even his English was at times difficult to understand. He'd had cancer and he'd had half his tongue removed, but I never did sort of say, “What did you say?” because I knew it was so difficult for him to talk anyway.

He drove me in and dropped me at 10 Emile Deschanel, which was the Minister's official residence, a charming house, and I was really just walking on air. But immediately when I got to Paris, France was all entangled in problems with Tunisia.

Q: The Sakiet incident took place after you got there then?

LYON: I can't remember the exact date, but we were already worrying about it then. It may have happened just as I got there. Algerian rebels were crossing into Tunisia to take refuge, and the French bombed the Tunisian village of Sakiet. Bourguiba was frantic; he thought the French were going to invade Tunisia. He appealed to the UN, where France was censured. We and the British accepted the French feeler for our good offices. Bob Murphy and a man from the British Foreign Office, Harold Beeley, came over. They shuttled back and forth between Paris and Tunis trying to calm things down.

Q: I was on the receiving end in the Department during that time. I had the Moroccan and Tunisian desk.

LYON: Well, you probably remember more of the details than I do. Of course, we all admired Mr. Murphy—he was a wonderful Foreign Service Officer—but it was not a wise selection, because the French remembered him from the wartime days in Algeria and the landings of American troops. De Gaulle and he didn't exactly hit it off.

Q: Yes, I remember all too well. Did you have a feeling that the Murphy-Beeley Good Offices Mission, in effect, served to weaken the Fourth Republic and to diminish its prestige? I've often wondered whether the advent of the Fifth Republic wasn't speeded

up by the demonstration that the Fourth couldn't hack it in North Africa without third-party intervention.

LYON: Well, you were closer to that than I was.

Q: I always thought it was a terrible mistake for the Fourth Republic.

LYON: You did? You're probably right, but the Fourth Republic was so darn weak anyway.

Q: Oh, I agree, and in that sense the whole mess led to a good thing. It probably helped bring in the Fifth Republic, which certainly was an improvement for everybody, even though we had our problems with it.

LYON: Then they had trouble with Morocco...

Q: De Gaulle, of course, was disgusted by our mixing in.

LYON: There was one trouble after another in North Africa and France was in a terrible state.

Q: Both Morocco and Tunisia were already independent. But as I remember, the Moroccans caught the fever from the Tunisians and made trouble for the French troops there.

LYON: Yes, they were having troubles with the French.

Q: The French always had problems in Morocco and Tunisia but I don't think they were ever as bad as the war in Algeria.

LYON: But, in any event, in May when de Gaulle came back to power it was really remarkable. We got there in March and he came to power in May. I remember that Dulles came over about a month after he was there to brief—sent by Eisenhower—to brief de Gaulle and bring him up-to-date on our relations and problems of the world. Actually it was

the only time I'd seen Dulles rather nervous. We were sitting around with the Ambassador; Burke Elbrick was the Western Europe Assistant Secretary of State, he came with Dulles, and Looram of the French desk. We were going over how Dulles would talk to de Gaulle; and everybody was giving him advice, and I said, “Butter him up, Mr. Secretary.” And Dulles gave me a scathing look, as if to say, “Me butter anybody up?”

But then we got to the meeting and General de Gaulle said, “Alors, Monsieur le Secretaire. Qu'est-ce que vous avez-a dire?” Dulles was doodling and there seemed to me to be an interminable silence before he spoke.

Q: He must have inherited this from his uncle. Wasn't it Lansing who was doodling all during the Versailles conference?

LYON: Lansing, his uncle, yes. Well, in any event, he was a great doodler and I thought, “Oh my goodness, won't he start to speak?” and was waiting and waiting. And then he started and he did a tour d'horizon of our foreign policy and it was absolutely superb. I've never known anything like it, without a note, it was just all off the top of his head. It had been agreed that they wouldn't have interpreters because Dulles spoke French and de Gaulle thought he spoke enough English, he wouldn't need it. But it hadn't been going very long when de Gaulle said, “Oh, my English is too rusty,” he used a French word, I think its rouille. So Claude Lebel did the interpreting. And I was a note-taker, and the other note-taker for the French side was Charles Lucet, who later ended up as Ambassador in Washington and head of the Western Europe division of the Quai d'Orsay. But anyway de Gaulle sat there. He was very nervous. He kept stretching his neck. And every now and then he'd write a note on a piece of paper, but only, I think, very few times. I think Dulles talked for about three-quarters of an hour. It was terrific. And then he stopped and de Gaulle answered him, absolutely perfectly with just these few notes he'd written. It was a wonderful exchange of views and I was so pleased that it had gone so well. That night we all dined at the Embassy with the Ambassador, Dulles and his staff or the people who had come with him. The Ambassador made a few nice remarks; then Dulles made some

nice remarks and he said, “De Gaulle is an extraordinary man. He's in retirement for years, and, while there, he thinks.” You'll remember he had been in retirement, first after 1946 and then again after 1953, in Colombey-les-Deux Eglises. And he said, “When he comes back to power, he puts his thoughts to work, and uses them.”

Q: What was the Secretary's emphasis, on the communist menace?

LYON: Yes.

Q: And what about de Gaulle's?

LYON: De Gaulle more or less answered him. But I don't think he said anything about getting out of NATO. I think he supported the North Atlantic Tripartite concept as against the NATO organization.

Q: That all came to a head later but at this point...

LYON: I think he mentioned it even then. He was very worried about Algeria, of course; he talked about Algeria.

Q: Did he say anything, do you remember if he said anything specifically about the U.S., UK, French directorate? You remember the famous memorandum.

LYON: Not yet, not then. But, of course, that all came to a head later and caused us so much trouble.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the Secretary inherited the Rooseveltian detestation of de Gaulle?

LYON: I didn't. And I also had the feeling that de Gaulle himself had mellowed a great deal. He didn't seem to have any resentment vis-a-vis us, although we know he did after reading his book. But that certainly didn't come out. He was very gracious, de Gaulle,

and very receptive and thanked the President for sending Dulles, and he hoped that the President would come on a visit. No, I don't think he showed any sort of resentment, or I didn't get the impression of it, even though we know he harbored some resentments from the war.

Q: De Gaulle never unveiled his plans before he was ready to move.

LYON: No, of course he didn't, and he had the ability to cover up with double talk, as with his plans for Algeria.

Q: Actually there were plenty of internal reasons for his holding back, but we'll get back to that after we've talked about the assassination attempt at Petit Clamart.

LYON: Let me say just one thing about tactics. I think a lot of people when they called on de Gaulle and wanted to sell something or get him to do something, they thought he was agreeing with them if he didn't answer them. But often he really wasn't agreeing; he just wasn't making any comment at all. Don't you think that was true?

Q: Absolutely.

LYON: I think a lot of people were fooled by that. On the other hand, some people always said, you know, that once he'd made up his mind, he never changed. But I think we know he did. In the Algerian thing, he changed very considerably. At the beginning it was total surrender for the Algerians and all that, and then he worked it out by getting more lenient.

Q: Yes, maybe, but I've never been able to decide whether he meant all that stuff he told the French and the military in Algiers—"Je vous ai compris" and all that. I had a feeling that he knew damn well that at the end of the affair, Algerie Francaise just wasn't going to wash.

LYON: Oh, I think he did know, and he was so wise. I think he handled it very well.

Q: Yes, he was very farsighted, and astute too.

LYON: I think Frenchmen, when he came in, thought, “Oh, he has all the answers.” I don't think he had all the answers, but I think he knew how to wait and move slowly, and move a little bit here, try an idea and then if it didn't work try out another one. You hadn't got to Paris yet, but people were relieved that he was in power—we'll leave everything to papa. We'll let him worry about it—and he was quite prepared to worry about it.

Q: Did you have any echoes of the Debre thesis that what we were out to do was to kick the French out of Algeria so the imperialists could inherit the oil?

LYON: Oh, did I not!

Q: No, no, I mean, do you have any feeling that this was very widely believed in France?

LYON: You know, everybody was saying we wanted to get them out so we could get the oil. And I'd go out to dinner and French people would attack me with this. And in those days I was able to say, “Don't be silly. We've got oil running out of our ears,” which we did have then, though we later didn't. And then I'd throw out some remark and one Frenchman would agree and one would disagree and they'd get into a fight, and then I'd back away. I'm glad you mentioned that.

Q: On the left, though where this Debre thesis should have been popular, I always had the feeling that Algeria was more like Vietnam for us with the left wing. I don't know whether they bought the Debre thesis or not.

LYON: I don't know whether they did, but I know that all the bankers and people like that—the leading upper crust—had this feeling.

Oh, I'm so glad you mentioned Debre because about a week or two weeks before de Gaulle returned to power, I was invited by a delightful American, a retired diplomat who

lived in Paris whom you probably knew, Louis Einstein. Louis Einstein was a widower; he used to give stag luncheons and he very kindly used to invite me to them. One day he called up and said, “Debre is coming to lunch tomorrow and I think you ought to know him.” So I went to lunch and we hadn't been there very long when Debre started this attack that we wanted to get the French out because of the oil. And I went back at him hammer and tongs and poor Louis Einstein, the host, kept getting more and more embarrassed and trying to change the subject and talking about Czechoslovakia where he'd been Ambassador, but Debre and I went at it full, full, force. After the luncheon, we came down stairs and I had a car and he didn't. I said, “Can I give you a lift home?” He agreed and then he said, “You know this has been interesting, let's get to know each other.” I wasn't going to let that slip. I didn't know he was going to become Prime Minister the next week, but I immediately got him for lunch again and we really became very good friends. And when I used to accompany the Ambassador, when he was Prime Minister, he would sit there, as you mentioned the other night, with that little boyish face and his head slanted to the left, and he'd say the most outrageous things, and I'd think, “This man is Prime Minister. He shouldn't be saying these things about Algeria and everything.” Then I would think...and you couldn't tell whether what he was saying was his own idea or whether it was de Gaulle talking. They both talked very much the same, and they both had the same ideas and their thoughts were absolutely linked together.

Q: Its curious, though, isn't it? With Debre the quality of greatness just wasn't there, was it?

LYON: No, but he was a bright man. I remember once when he'd just come back from Algiers, and he was all thrilled. They were putting up a sort of line of defense—an electric wire defense on the border—and he was most enthusiastic about it. He turned to the Ambassador and said, “You ought to go to Algeria. Have you ever been to Algiers?” The Ambassador said, “No.” “You ought to go.” And Mr. Houghton sort of backed away and said, “No, I can't.” “Well you ought to go, Lyon.” I said, “I'd love to.” I thought it was just talk. He said, “I'll arrange it” and I thought he never would. I got back to the office and the

telephone was ringing, and the French official said, “The Prime Minister wants us to make arrangements for you to go to Algeria.” So I immediately accepted, and I stayed with Paul Delouvrier the Delegue General (High Commissioner) for Algeria. I had a most interesting time.

Q: Did you go with French escort?

LYON: Entirely.

Q: We were still going back and forth to Algeria when I was there in 1961. I made the last trip which it was possible to do under French aegis. It was just before independence.

LYON: We had a French plane, and French escort everywhere I went. And I must say I admired those young French officers, the ones who were sort of out in the field running things in the outlying areas.

Q: The Affaires Indigenes people? They were first class.

LYON: First class, and so wonderful for a young man to have such responsibility. I remember thinking how interesting for them.

Q: I shouldn't hog the conversation here, but that was the only French administrative thing, that was really first class in Morocco during the difficult days. The military staffed the Affaires Indigenes and they were wonderful.

LYON: They were wonderful. Sort of a super Peace Corps.

Q: Pure paternalism, but it was very good. Can we go to the Eisenhower visit and the terrible bust-up?

LYON: One more thing first. I think it was on May 13, just before de Gaulle came back to power, that there was a general insurrection of the French military in Algiers. The British

Minister in Paris, Jerry Young, had been Third Secretary in Peking when I was Third Secretary there, so we were delighted to work together. I was sitting in my office late at night and he came rushing over. He said, “Cecil, they're going to land in Paris, they're going to take Paris.” And I said, “Oh, don't be silly. I've come from Latin America. We have those things in Latin America, but we don't have them in France.” He said, “Well they are, they are.” He was terribly worried, you see. And just then the telephone rang, Burke Elbrick in Washington on the other end, “How are things in Paris?” They were all excited in Washington. I said, “I'm sitting here in my office, looking out on the Place de la Concorde, the fountains are playing, all the lights are on, everything is fine, don't get worried.” They didn't want to hear that, they wanted to hear that some terrible thing was happening.

Q: In a way, it was a preview of the thing that happened three years later, the putsch of the Generals—Challe and company—in Algiers, April 1961.

LYON: When Ambassador Gavin was there and I had all my trouble about our intelligence gathering. Another thing about Algeria. I never could understand the French insisting that it was a Department of Metropolitan France.

Q: “Partie Integrante de la France.”

LYON: Which was crazy because it really wasn't, and you had to have a visa to get in there. Now you didn't have to have a visa to get into Normandy, or Brittany.

Q: Now what about the Eisenhower visit which took place in September 1959?

LYON: That was a great occasion and de Gaulle was insistent that everything should go perfectly and smoothly. I think he wanted to bury the hatchet as far as the troubles they had had during the war. And I had charge of making our arrangements so I got to see a lot of his aides. We worked everything out, and everything had to be submitted, every tiny detail, had to be submitted to General de Gaulle himself to approve for that visit. And then he went out to the airport to meet General Eisenhower...

Q: Was this an echo of his wartime relationship, or was he this way with all the visitors?

LYON: I think he wanted to bury the wartime relationship.

Q: Well, the wartime relationship wasn't always bad, you know.

LYON: Well it was with FDR.

Q: I mean the relationship with Eisenhower.

LYON: It wasn't too bad?

Q: No, he said that Eisenhower had given in, don't you remember, on the question of taking Strasbourg and de Gaulle said, "You're a man who recognizes when he's made a mistake."

LYON: Anyway, as they were coming in from the airport there were lots of cheers, and I think de Gaulle said, "You see how much you're loved here, you're respected here." And Eisenhower, with his usual tact said, "Ah, but I think a good deal of this is for you, General de Gaulle." The visit was a tremendous success. I remember going down to one of the receptions at the Hotel de Ville; there were crowds and crowds. I was a little disappointed because I felt de Gaulle was going out of his way to be nice, and sort of reaching out to Eisenhower, which was not in the nature of de Gaulle's character. And it was usually in the nature of Eisenhower to be outgoing, but I felt Eisenhower was sort of holding back a little, that he wasn't going out to be friendly with de Gaulle as much as de Gaulle was going out to be friendly with him. And I remember the last night was spent in Rambouillet, the President, de Gaulle and their respective staffs. I think Eisenhower's son was with him and Scowcroft. I think he was there but I'm not sure.

Q: Oh, Brent Scowcroft.

LYON: And the Ambassador. They all spent the night and they had a dinner at Rambouillet, a stag dinner, and they very kindly invited me to go. I got out there about 15 minutes ahead of time. I was alone and I was waiting in a sitting room, and Debre arrived. Debre and I were having a nice little chat and suddenly the door opened. General de Gaulle walked through, nodded at us, and loomed over the table where he had arranged the gifts that he was going to present. He was giving a Houdon bust of Lafayette, I think, to President Eisenhower and he had a gift for each of the visiting team. And he looked at the card for each, to be sure that everything was correct. I thought this infinite attention to detail was interesting.

Q: Father Christmas.

LYON: Well, yes, but for a busy man! And yet he never seemed busy. He always seemed to have plenty of time for everyone; and calm, and he was never rushed. We were talking, I think, the other night about his blindness. He'd had cataracts and he'd had the operation. He didn't think it was proper or appropriate for the Chief of State to wear glasses. But he couldn't really see without his glasses. I remember once at the dedication of the Place de l'Etoile. It was a circle, and he got out of his car and he started to walk where he thought was straight ahead, but there was a crowd there and he kept bumping into the crowd and the aides kept nudging him because he couldn't see. Also, Pompidou told me that when de Gaulle became president and Coty left the presidency, he and de Gaulle drove together to the Arc de Triomphe and placed flowers on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Then de Gaulle drove back to the Elys#e with Pompidou, which was a great mark of respect for Pompidou. Pompidou said the streets were lined with crowds but that sometimes, surprisingly enough, French crowds can be quiet, they don't yell or demonstrate. They often do both but I mean they weren't making any noise and de Gaulle turned to Pompidou and he said, “Pompidou, est que il y a de la foule?” The streets were packed with people But he couldn't see that far. And then at the time of the Kennedy visit, we all went to lunch at the Elys#e and de Gaulle gave gifts to the President and Mrs. Kennedy. He suddenly

found himself all alone and he grabbed me by the arm and said, “Regardez, Monsieur le Premier Conseiller,” as he called me, “Voila,” and he pointed to the ceiling on which were painted three or four scenes. He told me what each scene was, and he didn't have his glasses on so I knew he couldn't see it but he must have memorized it at some point. He had a fantastic memory, as you know. They tell me he'd write a speech, read it over once, and say it without a correction.

Q: I remember the speech he gave about the gold standard.

LYON: Was it wonderful?

Q: Well, it wasn't very sound, I guess, but he had memorized, I suppose, ten pages from Jacques Rueff's book about the gold standard and he just reeled it off as though it was his own stuff.

LYON: Well, you know, they say he could read anything over once, and that was all he needed to give it without a mistake.

Q: Let's get back to the other Eisenhower visit and the collapse of the Summit in May, 1960.

LYON: Do you want me to talk about the Summit?

Q: Yes. Where were you during all this ghastly episode?

LYON: Well, we were there, of course.

Q: Were you present during the meeting?

LYON: No, no, I wasn't at any of the meetings. But Chip and Livy Merchant were both staying with us, so we had a pretty good rundown of it. And Elsie has actually written that up somewhere; she made a very good description of it all. Chip came home one day and

said, “Well there's no summit.” As you recall, Khrushchev was there and it was just after the U-2 incident when the Russians had shot down the U-2. Eisenhower had taken the blame, but Khrushchev insisted that he apologize. Eisenhower refused. He said he was sorry it happened and, “I take the blame.” De Gaulle was a little inept, in that he should have let Eisenhower speak first. But Khrushchev, as you know, rose up and cursed out the United States, and cursed out Eisenhower, and then wouldn't go on with the Summit unless Eisenhower apologized, which he didn't.

But it was at that meeting, as I recall, that de Gaulle proved himself a good ally and said to President Eisenhower, “Well, come what may, we'll be with you all the way.”

Q: The incident took place a few days before Eisenhower came to Paris, didn't it?

LYON: Yes, only a few days...

Q: It was in the public domain, though before he arrived?

LYON: Oh, yes. And in the States Eisenhower had said, “Its all my fault, I'm Chief of State.”

Q: That's when we had that famous morning with Acheson at the War College that I told you about.

LYON: Oh, really? In any event, this is where I made another gaffe. Its surprising I lasted as long as I did in the Service. We were all dining at the Residence that night with President Eisenhower and his people and everyone was a bit downcast. And I said, “Well, there's one person who will be very happy that this has happened.” And the President said, “Who?” And I said, “Eisenhower.” He said, “What?” And Bohlen said, “Cecil, what are you talking about, what do you mean?” I said, “My God, I mean Adenauer.” So you can see what a successful career I had.

But anyway, the President was supreme. He didn't seem terribly concerned, I mean he was concerned, but he said, “Oh well, you have these things happen, and you've got to take them.” He was rather philosophical.

Q: You're talking about Eisenhower?

LYON: Yes, not Adenauer.

Q: Eisenhower was not easy to rattle.

LYON: But Adenauer, you know, was against the Summit and he didn't want it to be held at all, as I recall. That's why I was thinking of Adenauer.

At the dinner Eisenhower made a remark I have never forgotten. He said everyone always says, “You must be under great pressure, and don't feel stress.”

Q: MacMillan, I gather, was practically reduced to tears about the thing.

LYON: Who?

Q: MacMillan. He had staked everything on this.

LYON: The German names remind me of when I was head of German affairs. Somebody called up the State Department and they wanted to speak to Mr. Sechsauer. And I was head of German affairs and they thought Sechsauer, Adenauer, Eisenhower, he must be in German affairs. So the call was put through to German affairs, and they said, “Do you have a Sechsauer in German affairs?” And the operator said, “No, since Mr. Lyon has been here we don't even have a coffee break.”

Q: Tell us something about the Cuban missile crisis in the autumn of '62, and the Acheson mission.

LYON: Well, you've asked a very pertinent question, because that was one of the most exciting times in my stay in Paris. As I recall, it was an autumn Sunday. I was at home with flu. The telephone rang and Washington told me a very distinguished person would be arriving that night at 12:00 midnight or 1:00 a.m. or some dreadful hour, not at Only but at an American airfield way out to hell and gone, I don't remember which one.

Q: Evreux maybe?

LYON: It probably was Evreux. And I should meet him. Something must have been said that gave me a hint that it was Acheson because I wasn't surprised when I got out to the airport and Acheson stepped off the plane with a couple of people; one was Sherman Kent. I don't remember who else was with him, but I think there were one or two.

It was very funny, because I was in bed with flu, but things got so exciting, and I was so involved that my flu vanished. Acheson said he had to see de Gaulle right away and it was then 2:00 a.m. in the morning, or 1:00 a.m. in the morning. I said, “I know he's at Colombey- les-Deux Eglises but I'll call the Elys#e immediately in the morning,” and I did. I explained what it was, and I was able then to explain who it was. I said, “He's been sent by the President on a very special mission and he has to see President de Gaulle as soon as possible.” I was told the President would see him the moment he got back from Colombey-les-Deux Eglises, which was about 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon, I think. And I said it must be kept very hush, we don't want anyone to know he's here. So they arranged for us to enter a side door.

Q: Excuse me. Had it already become public before Acheson got there?

LYON: No. The crisis had become public but we wanted to keep his visit absolutely quiet because he was going on to London and Bonn, as I recall. We went in to a sort of side entrance, through the concierge's room, and then we went down through the cellar. I must say, I don't know that we actually went through the cellar, but Acheson in his book

describes it, saying that we climbed under water pipes; he embellishes it greatly. Then we went up some back stairs and General de Gaulle greeted us. And they had brought, as I remember, visual aids, so Mr. Kent had the visual equipment set up with a big map to show about the missile emplacements and so on. Acheson explained, and then Kent explained, and they all gave the technicalities of where the missiles were within Cuba. They showed them photographs which had been taken by our planes, or some sort of flying satellite.

De Gaulle was terribly impressed: the old soldier, you see, was coming out. And he got up and looked at the visual aid very carefully, with his glasses, and he said as I recall...Schlesinger describes it a little bit in his book—he wasn't there, but he evidently read the telegrams which I sent—and he said, “Well, you told me after the event, but of course, at times independent nations must make their own decision. But whatever happens, France will be with you all the way.” And I almost kissed him. And, of course, Acheson was supremely happy. Acheson went on to London and he showed the same things to MacMillan or whoever was Prime Minister and then on to Germany.

I heard later that neither of those leaders came forward so strongly. They didn't say, “We'll be with you all the way.” They agreed but they weren't quite as forthcoming. So it was good; even though de Gaulle was a terrible pain in most things for us, in the crisis he did come through and supported us. That's about all I remember of that.

I remember that poor Elsie thought that she had to wake the Secretary—no, he wasn't the Secretary then, he was just a private individual—about 10:00 or 11:00 and she did. He was very nice about it. But he didn't have to get up that early, because we didn't go until about 2:00. Elsie was very upset but I think Acheson went back to sleep.

Q: Reading Viansson-Ponte's wonderful history of the Republique Gaullienne, I'm impressed with the frequency of the assassination attempts on de Gaulle and the political effects of the incident at Petit Clamart—you remember Bastien-Thiery and all the military

fanatics and other gangsters. That business and his miraculous escape seem to have whizzed up the machinery after August 1962 in consolidating the institutions of the Fifth Republic. Do you remember: was there any reaction in Washington, or in the Embassy?

LYON: I think everybody was shocked. We knew there were constant attempts to assassinate him. Pompidou and Olivier Guichard and all those people who were his aides—Pompidou was de Gaulle's aide before de Gaulle became President, when he was still Prime Minister—and they all would tell me they couldn't do anything with de Gaulle. Secretly he probably thought it would be a good thing if he were assassinated, that he'd go down in history as even more of a hero. They'd tell him that something was going to happen, or that they'd heard rumors that somebody might try to assassinate him somewhere but he'd go there anyway. He'd insist on going, nothing could put him off. And during that terrible thing at Petit Clamart, which you recall, but people don't remember now, he had to drive through a square and at two corners of the Square they had trucks lined up with machine guns in them. His car had to drive through a stream of bullets, one coming from the right and another stream coming from the left, and the car was pretty well pocked with bullet marks, one just behind where his head would have been. You heard that they got him down on the floor but I heard that when his son-in-law, who was sitting in the front seat, told the General to duck, he sat up even straighter. But who knows, we can't tell those details.

I do remember another attempt when he was motoring down to Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, which was something like a four or five hours drive if I'm not mistaken. Finally they got him to stop driving and they flew him down. But this time he was driving along and it had been raining, and they saw a little sort of flash on the roadside. They all hopped out to see what it was, and it was a fuse leading back into the woods to a bomb that had sort of fizzled out because of the rain or the wet ground. And de Gaulle looked at it and he said, “Alors, it's either a jest and in very bad humor, or its dangerous. Let's get the hell out of here,” and they all rushed to the car and drove off.

Q: Let's backtrack for just a minute. We've mentioned the Tripartite Memorandum but we haven't gone into any great detail about that. That was in '58 as I remember.

LYON: September 24th was the famous memorandum, in which de Gaulle suggested a planning group of the three allies, France, Great Britain, and the United States. We were very concerned about that. I think de Gaulle was aiming to get back on the old wartime footing of the three. I think we thought it would cause trouble in Germany. I'm not sure it would have. I thought maybe Adenauer could have been talked to because he had established such friendly relations with de Gaulle. Of course, in 1958 they hadn't advanced to the point they did later. Then, as a way to avoid getting in too deep, we suggested, as General de Gaulle had been out of things for a long time, that he be given a briefing by the military so he would know the present status of all the atomic bombs, etc., etc. Then they couldn't decide who would give him the briefing. The Commander of NATO wanted to give him...

Q: Where were you at this point? Were you in Paris?

LYON: I was in Paris, yes. And the Commander of SAC also thought he should do it. So they fussed about that for a long time, and then it was suggested that it be done at rather a lower scale. Joxe would go from France and Bob Murphy, who was the Deputy Under Secretary of State would be our man, and the third man would be Lord Hood, who had same job in Washington that I had in Paris. Well, let's make a sort of summary of it. It never worked out. A lot of people claim that we never answered the letter and for some time we had difficulty finding the answer. But we had really answered de Gaulle. I think Chip was the one that dug it out and found that we had because he was convinced that we had.

Q: It was a rather evasive reply.

LYON: It was an evasive letter and de Gaulle was put out by it, and I always felt as I did about the atomic question. De Gaulle wanted to develop his little atomic bomb. He said it would only be enough “to pull off an arm”. That was his expression. He knew it couldn't be very much but he wanted to have it, and he wanted us to help him, but we never would. President Eisenhower said to Ambassador Houghton, “I'd like to slip him one under the table.” But what was it—the McMahon Amendment?—that prevented giving help.

Q: I don't remember. Bombinette, I remember was the French expression for the first French atomic weapon.

LYON: The what?

Q: His bombinette—de Gaulle's little bomb.

I remember one of the indiscreet imps at the Elys#e telling me about General de Gaulle's discussion of the bombinette with Vinogradov, the Soviet Ambassador. Nothing can cure the French sweet tooth for indiscretions, especially when there is a victim involved. Vinogradov had been smart enough to keep in touch with General de Gaulle during the “passage of the desert” before 1958, when he was still at Colombey. I think they may have known each other during the war in Algiers. Anyway, he came in sometime in the early '60's, under instructions from Moscow to protest the French atomic experiments in the Sahara and to warn against expanding the French weapons program. Vinogradov took the tone of comradely sorrow instead of the usual Soviet bluster. He told General de Gaulle it was a pity France was wasting vast sums on a program that could serve no purpose. He said, “Let us suppose that with this bombinette you are working on, you were to succeed in destroying one Soviet city—say Kiev or Odessa—what would be the result?” De Gaulle waited politely for the Ambassador to answer his own question. “In retaliation,” Vinogradov said, “France unhappily would be wiped off the map (La France serait rayee de la carte).”

General de Gaulle thought this over for a minute. “But in that event, my dear Vinogradov,” he said, “you and I would die together wouldn't we? Nos mourions ensemble, n'est-ce pas?” I always remember that—and lots of other remarks—when people try to tell me that de Gaulle had no sense of humor.

LYON: You are right, he did have a good sense of humor. Guichard told me that once he was talking with Boegner, in de Gaulle's outer office. Someone had blundered and Boegner exclaimed, “That fool. I'd like to liquidate all the fools in the world.” At that point le grand Charles entered the room and said, “Un vaste programme.”

In any event, I felt we could have been a little more forthcoming. After all, if we considered France worthy to be an ally, why not help them a little with the bomb? But another argument was, if we help them, then we'd have to help Germany, etc., etc. As you know, we never did anything about it.

Q: There are some people who think that de Gaulle never really expected anything from that Memorandum about the Tripartite Directorate..

LYON: I think he was probably too sensible.

Q: He may have been feeling the pulse for the future, and he would have been very surprised if we had gone along with all of it.

LYON: I think that's probably right because he was no fool, in my opinion.

Q: Tell us a little about the Kennedy visit in '62.

LYON: That was the most delightful visit from the point of view of Franco-American relations. I was so proud. I think all Americans were so proud to have that dashing, bright, young President come to France accompanied by the ravishing Jackie Kennedy.

Q: I remember it very well.

LYON: Everybody remembers it. And I remember going to a luncheon which the American press gave for Kennedy, and with his usual wit he got up and said, “You ask who I am? I'm the young man who came to Paris with Jackie Kennedy.” De Gaulle gave a wonderful dinner out at Versailles where they really laid on the dog, the table was covered with gold cloths, and beautiful china, and fountains playing, and wonderful music. It was really like the old days of Versailles, and looking over across the table and seeing Jackie sitting on the right hand of President de Gaulle, speaking flawless French, made one awfully proud to be an American. I think the visit was a tremendous success.

Q: Was there any really substantive business?

LYON: I don't think so. I think it was just a sort of state visit.

Q: He was on his way to Vienna, really, wasn't he?

LYON: Yes. As you know, when General Gavin came as Ambassador to Paris, he was convinced that he was going to improve relations with France, that the President wanted to improve them. The President secretly really was a great admirer of de Gaulle. So I have been told by my son-in-law, who was the President's brother-in-law. But it never worked and as you know, Gavin got disillusioned and retired after two years. But I must say that was very early in de Gaulle's return to power and I had a feeling that things were really going to get better. But we had plenty of trouble ahead.

Q: What were the effects in Paris when the OAS (Organization AMR Secrete) went crazy at the end of the Algerian crisis, just before independence.

LYON: Well, we mentioned how de Gaulle was constantly being threatened. He wasn't the only one. I remember there were all sorts of bombs...plastics, weren't they called? —being set off all over Paris. Beaumarchais at the Foreign Office had the front of his

building blown off. Beuve-Mery of LeMonde—building was plastiqued. I had a terrible scare because Joxe, who was then Minister for Algeria and was handling the negotiations with the Algerians came to dinner one night; and after, he lingered on, talking with me after most of the guests had left. He and his wife went out and there was no car to drive them home. The car hadn't come for them. And he called up some garage, I don't know what it was, I suppose it was some government garage and kept saying, “Joxe, Joxe, the Minister for Algeria.” They evidently didn't get his name or didn't know. And then, finally, a car came up and usually they had a policeman sitting in the front seat. This car didn't have any, and I was terrified as he drove off because I was afraid something might happen to him—kidnapped or something. And I said, “Please telephone me the moment you get to your house.” And fortunately, about fifteen minutes later, he did telephone. But that was the sort of nervous state we were all in.

Cy Sulzberger, of the NY Times, was a very good friend, whom I used to see a great deal of. He wrote an article that was pretty critical of the OAS, and I thought, “My God, they'll do something to him.” He came in the day he had published the article and I said, “Look, I think you ought to tell the police to give you some protection because you may be plastiqued.” He said, “Oh, bull” or something; I mean he used a stronger word than that. And I said, “I think you should.” He said, “I wouldn't hear of it.” So I got the CIA man, and I said, “I'm worried about Sulzberger.” So he arranged with the French police to put some guards on his house, and a few days later Cy came in and he said, “There're a lot of goons around my house. Is it you who did that?” I had to admit it was; he writes about it in The Last of the Giants.

1960 didn't start very well for me. I got a polyp in my right eye and I went to a French doctor, and he said, “This isn't going to hurt,” and he stuck something in my eye. I felt that he'd stuck a dagger in it. And then he bandaged it up, and he said I could take the bandage off the next morning which I did and there was still a little bump in my eye but it had moved slightly. And I called him up and I said, “Should there still be a little bump?” “What bump? No, no, there shouldn't.” So I rushed down to see him, and he said, “We'll

have to give you another operation." I lunched with the Ambassador that day and he said, "You're a fool. You hop on a plane and go home right away," which I did and I saw my own doctor and I had the operation, it was very minor. And then I was starting back for Paris and I got to the airport, and I ran into Raymond LaPorte and I said, "Why are you going back? He said, "I'm going to Paris to have an operation on my eye." And I felt like saying, "You're going in the wrong direction." But I didn't and he looked at my eye and I had a patch on, and he said, "What's that?" "Oh," I said, "I've got a little conjunctivitis or something." I didn't dare tell him and I never told the French that the first doctor had not been successful because I knew it would have been a scandal that they'd all start talking about.

Q: Who was LaPorte?

LYON: Raymond LaPorte, oh, I should have said, Consul General in New York—the French Consul General, and he was going back to Paris to have the operation that I'd just come to the States for. Well anyway, it was cold, and dreary, and horrible when we got back and I was scheduled to go off on a trip to Africa. It was just before the African French colonies had gained their independence. The Military Attach# was also accredited there or those colonies were under his observation and he used to take a tour of them every year. I went off with him feeling pretty grim with my eye and a cold. We spent the first night in Algiers. Freddy Lyon was the Consul General there but I wasn't able to see him because I was still sick, but I was beginning to feel better and better. The next night, as I remember, we spent in Tamanrasset where I got up early the next morning to go to very early mass. It was pitch black; it was where Pere Foucauld had been. I'd never heard of Pere Foucauld before I went to France but he was quite a character. He'd been an aristocrat, and sort of a playboy, and he traveled disguised as a rabbi all over part of Africa where the French weren't allowed to go.

Q: A rabbi?

LYON: Yes, I don't know why, I've forgotten, but I remember that made an impression on me. In any event, he later became a priest and a very good one, and a missionary, and he had lots of converts. And in this little chapel I've never felt so near to God. It was dark, and slowly it got lighter, and there was only one other person there besides the priest and me. And it was quiet in the desert; it was really terribly impressive.

Amongst other people I saw the famous Abbe Youlou who, you may remember, presented President Eisenhower with a baby elephant. The first one died, and then he got another one called Dumbo. You may not remember, but we had the great problem of getting this little baby elephant from Paris to the States. Because some General had shipped his dog on the plane and got a lot of criticism, we didn't want to have some scandal come out of using the Army plane to transport an elephant to President Eisenhower.

Q: Was it accepted? Did it get to the States?

LYON: It finally got there and the President didn't know what the devil to do with it and he finally gave it to the Washington Zoo. Abbe Youlou was in Brazzaville, wasn't he? I think so. And before I left Paris, Pompidou, with whom I'd become great friends—I'll talk a little bit about that later—said, “Oh, when you get to Brazzaville, be sure to go over to Leopoldville because we—that was the Rothschild Bank—own the ferry.” Did you ever know that? Well anyway, I did go over. I had lunch with the Consul General and I felt that things were very tense. I kept thinking how wonderfully the Belgians had developed that country, except they hadn't educated the people enough to take over really, they'd kept them rather down. But I saw the first reactor I'd ever seen, the first atomic reactor I'd ever seen, I saw in Leopoldville in the University. And when I did get back to Brazzaville that night, they all told me I was very lucky to get back because there'd been riots. I'd seen a few riots but they didn't seem to be serious; but they'd become quite serious and plane connections had been stopped, and apparently the ferry was stopped after I came back.

Q: This was before the period of the massacre at Stanleyville and all that business, wasn't it?

LYON: Yes, it was just before the Belgian Congo got its independence and, oh yes, I think it was about the time of all that trouble. I remember Bill Burden was our Ambassador to Belgium and he was constantly sending wires about it, of which we kept getting copies in Paris.

I talked to Youlou and he was insistent about wanting to be invited to the United States. And I said, “Well, you know, the President is very busy and we'll have to see if we can arrange it.” But he evidently thought he'd convinced me, because he invited me to dinner that night. And he never showed up at the dinner—it was at a restaurant—but he sent two of his Ministers instead, and they sat one on each side of me, and each one whispered to me at some point that they wanted to go to the United States too.

You can remember that period, just when the colonies all became free. I was very impressed that their leaders seemed to want primarily the symbols of power and strength: and black limousines, and beautiful houses, and trips to the United States. Of course, de Gaulle spoiled them a little bit, by constantly having them come to Paris where he'd treat them in the royal manner. Remember all those visits?

That was an interesting thing about de Gaulle, to watch the way he managed his presidency. You will recall that about every six weeks he'd take a tour around the country—to a different part of the country—and he'd make speeches, and he'd dine with the local officials, and he'd try out ideas and if they didn't go down very well he'd try another idea. Then when he got back he'd put these ideas into play. He also used to have a visiting Chief of State come about every month. And for a man his age it was remarkable that he was able to do all this and still run the country because he'd have to have dinner parties for all these people, and he'd have to take them hither and yon. I was always impressed with all that.

And another thing that I was impressed with. Some of those African countries had such wonderful government buildings, and schools, and hospitals, and I thought, “It is quite a thing to just give all this away.” Because the French had invested a great deal in Africa.

Q: Where else did you go besides the two Congos?

LYON: Well, I went to about all the French colonies.

Q: Really. Senegal?

LYON: Mali, Niamey, Chad—is Ouagadougou Chad?

Q: No, Ouagadougou is the capital of Upper Volta. The country is now Burkina Faso.

LYON: But I remember it was one of the grimmest places we'd been in. We spent one night there and we were supposed to leave at 9:00 the next morning or something like that. And usually there'd be stragglers getting out to the plane in most of the places when we were about to take off. There wasn't a straggler the next morning. They were all out at the airport about half an hour ahead of the time we were supposed to take off. Funnily enough, my nephew, Peter Moffat was Ambassador in Chad...

Q: Yes, I know.

LYON: ...and he liked it and he found it interesting. He was an awfully good sport.

Q: Don Normand was heavily involved in the Chad too, still is. That's really a mess.

LYON: Oh, that's Chad, I was talking about Upper Volta, wasn't I.

Q: Yes, that's Ouagadougou, that was Don Dumont, as I remember. Did you go to any of the naughty countries like Guinea which had opted out of the French union. Did you go to Conakry?

LYON: I went to Conakry, yes.

Q: Did you meet Sekou Toure?

LYON: I met Sekou Toure.

Q: Was Nkrumah staying with him then? The longest house guest in history. He fled, you know, from Ghana in 1966 and Sekou Toure took him in and I think he was there for many years until he died.

LYON: No, I don't think he was there. But some of those countries I found fascinating and I also was impressed with what respect most of the leaders had for France still. They were still very loyal to France, and as you know, Houphouet Boigny...

Q: That's a country I wanted to ask you about, yes, the Ivory Coast.

LYON: Cote d'Ivoire. That was almost like being at a party in France. You'd go to a dinner and the women would all be dressed in French clothes, and they were very pro-French.

Q: Well, I gather that the Ivory Coast is still more or less of a star exhibit among all those declining economies. They're not as well off as they were, but they're pretty good by comparison with the others.

LYON: Well, of course, the French poured a lot of money into those colonies.

Q: They still do.

LYON: I don't know if there is anything very substantive that I can say more about that journey.

Q: We were going to talk about Pompidou then.

LYON: The '62 journey with Guichard.

Q: Oh, Guichard, okay, the trip to Algeria.

LYON: Olivier Guichard, who had been in de Gaulle's cabinet, one of his assistants. I got to know him very well. He later became Minister for Planning National Economic Affairs. He was in charge of the Sahara desert area where the oil was being developed. And he invited me to go on a trip with him, and it was rather fascinating. We've always heard that in the desert there's no water. We got to places where they were drilling and water would be spraying up 20 feet high out of the desert. And I remember in one place, Ghardaia I think, we spent the night there. And we had a lot of the sheiks to dinner and I said, “Don't you hope they find oil here?” And they said, “We'd rather find water,” which was very wise.

And then we stopped to visit the man who developed those wonderful tractors that climbed over the dunes, I've forgotten what his name was. It was a very interesting trip.

Q: This was in '62?

LYON: '62.

Q: The Evian Agreements were approved in April, and then in July Algerian independence was approved and became official.

LYON: Another de Gaulle official that I purposely—its a little awkward to say, that I purposely, specifically cultivated, was Pompidou. Pompidou had been de Gaulle's Chef de Cabinet before de Gaulle became president. I mentioned earlier that when de Gaulle after taking over from Coty, had Pompidou drive down from the Arc de Triomphe with him, I thought, “Now that indicates Pompidou is going to be something more important later.” He went back to the Banque Rothschild where he had been before being taken on by de Gaulle. I used to see him; I'd have him for lunch, and see quite a lot of him, and his wife would come. And then, of course, he did become Chef de Cabinet, Prime Minister and it

was very useful to be able to see him. He later became president but I wasn't there when he became president.

Q: After that there was a kind of rift with de Gaulle, I think.

LYON: Oh, there was quite a rift by the time de Gaulle resigned. Do you remember, for three or four days de Gaulle disappeared when the troubles were stirring? I think that's when it was. I'd already left Paris, I didn't get into that.Before all this I remember Pompidou once saying to me that it was awful that the United States was dominating Europe. I said, “Come on, we're not dominating Europe, we're not trying to dominate Europe. Why would we have worked so hard to build a united Europe if we wanted to dominate it?” He said, “You can't help but dominate it because you're so rich, and you're so powerful, and you've got all these American companies all over the place.” He changed after he became president, he was very friendly to the United States and I think really one of the most outgoing presidents...certainly more outgoing than de Gaulle.

Q: I remember sitting next to him at your house at lunch. I think he was back in the bank or still an aide. He was charming to me. I felt as though I was talking to someone my own age, my own station.

LYON: He was very agreeable. I thought so, and I always talked very frankly with him. And as I say, I was cultivating him on purpose. After he became Prime Minister, Madame Pompidou said to me, “Why don't you ask us for dinner anymore?” I said, “Come on, I'm not the Ambassador. The Ambassador wouldn't like it if I had the Prime Minister to dine, and lunch, and things like that.” She said, “Oh, but we'd like it.” I didn't say anything to her —but I must say that whenever the Ambassador left town I scurried over to see Pompidou who became a really good friend. Norman Armour said I invented Pompidou because he came to lunch so frequently when Norman was there.

But I had a terrible let-down with him once. He'd invited us (I think it was when he was in the bank) he'd invited us to dinner and after dinner—it was small tables and we were

all sitting around—and he said, “Cecil, Francoise Sagan would like to talk to you.” And I thought, “Oh, la-la, mes beaux yeux!” He took me over to Francoise Sagan, and all she wanted was to get a visa for some friend of hers who'd been denied a visa because of drugs, as I recall, or something like that. So that was a terrible blow.

Q: Well, I think we've just about done it. I would like, if you have anything to say on the subject, to hear about de Gaulle's attitude toward the United States and Indochina.

LYON: Oh, I can tell you exactly what he said. I accompanied Rusk when he went to see de Gaulle during the Vietnam troubles, and de Gaulle said, “Get out of Vietnam.”

Q: Do you remember when this was, approximately?

LYON: Well, it was during the Rusk encounter. But he said, “You get out of Vietnam.” He didn't say it quite as bluntly as that, but he said, “Whatever you do, it will be considered a White Man's war against the Oriental, and I can't give you stronger advice,” and he kept making it stronger and stronger. So that's what I remember about his attitude about that.

Now would you be amused to know why I stayed so long in Paris?

Q: Sure, go ahead.

LYON: You can either rub this off, or not, but its sort of interesting. I think I had been there about four years when Peter Moffat, our nephew, was assigned to Paris and as you know, they never allow members of a family to stay at the same post. That's why I had to get out of Japan because I married the Ambassador's daughter.

Q: Oh, really, and it extended to the nephews!

LYON: Oh, yes. But they said, “However, as Lyon is going to be transferred shortly, we think it would be all right.” So Peter came, Peter stayed two years and went, and I was still there when he left.

Q: Yes. Peter worked for me, of course in the Third World part of the Political Section.

LYON: Anyway, when Gavin came to Paris, immediately, or shortly after he was there, there was one of the usual uprisings in Algiers, riots and things. And he was very concerned because his intelligence hadn't informed him that this was going to happen, and he said it put him in a very embarrassing situation.

Q: Was that the Challe Putsch in Algiers?

LYON: It must have been '60 or '61 when Gavin came. Incidentally, Mrs. Kennedy's mother in her book, says that the reason Jack, as she said, sent Gavin to Paris was he thought that sending a General to work with a General was a good idea. Well you know de Gaulle's feeling about Generals. He couldn't care less. But in any event Gavin was very upset and I...

Q: He and de Gaulle got on very well though, I think.

LYON: Oh, I think so. I was already assigned as Consul General in Hong Kong, and I was supposed to leave six weeks after General Gavin came. But in any event, thinking that my successor Durbrow was going to be there shortly, I said to Gavin—I tried to say it politely—that we didn't have any intelligence as the Army had. And I said, “You're the intelligence, and I'm the intelligence, and our staff are the intelligence, and we have very good relations...” Well, to make a long story short, I told him that really we had very good relations with the Foreign Office, and the Deputies, the press and almost everyone else, and that nobody had known it was coming. If they had known it was coming, it wouldn't have come; they would have stopped it. And he just grunted. I thought really, I'd been not rude, but I'd been awfully frank with him, but I did think it would help my successor. And a few days later he asked why I had to go to Hong Kong, and I said, “Well, I've been here quite a while, and we rotate officers, and things like that.” He called up Chester Bowles and said, “Why does Lyon have to go?” After a lot of talk, it was decided that I didn't have

to go. So I stayed happily on for another three or four years until nearly seven short years had passed.

Q: When I left in '65, Bob McBride was already there, and of course Ambassador Bohlen, who had arrived in the middle of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

LYON: I was only two years in Sri Lanka, and then I had about a year kicking around, as I told you.

What was the date of Kennedy's death? Have you got it in your head? It isn't very important.

Q: It was in '63. It was just about a year after the Cuban Missile crisis. Okay, would you like to tell something about the Kennedy assassination and the effects of that in Paris?

LYON: Oh, Lord yes, that was something, wasn't it? On November 22nd Elsie and I were scheduled to go to a cocktail party and then go on to dinner with the Joxes at the Jockey Club. We were just getting into the car and the telephone rang, and I've learned over the years not to answer the telephone at moments like that. I was taught by Jimmy Dunn. He said, “Its never anything important. If it is, they will always call you back. Its usually inviting you to a dinner that you don't want to go to, or some such thing, and there's no nicer sound than when it just dies down—the ringing of the phone.” So I said, “Elsie, don't answer it.” We went to the cocktail party. We drove up to the Jockey Club, oh, I don't know, an hour or so later. And the door man said, “You're American. Your President has been shot.” I dropped Elsie, and I rushed back to the Chancery. I didn't know whether he was dead, or just wounded or what. I got into the Chancery, and rushed to my office, and the telephone was ringing. It was Burin de Roziers telephoning de Gaulle's condolences. It was the first call we had, and it was from de Gaulle, which I thought quite remarkable. Ambassador Bohlen was away, he was on his way somewhere to shoot. We got him off the train at...

Q: He was going to Strasbourg, wasn't he?

LYON: He was going to go hunting with some French friends. Maybe it was Strasbourg. We got him off the train at Nancy. The telephone never stopped ringing. We put a book in the hall, which they do in France, so people can sign condolences. Immediately a line of people went round the block—you were there, you remember.

Q: Oh, of course. I was in charge of the ceremonial arrangements for Notre Dame. It nearly killed me, 48 hours without sleep, because it had to be synchronized, it had to be exactly the same time as the service in Washington. The seating protocol and invitations were incredibly complex. I tried to beg for time. I said, "Can't we put it off for another day?" Mr. Bohlen said, "No, no. You just get back to your desk."

LYON: Well, anyway, as you know, everybody was crying, every shop window immediately put out a photograph of Kennedy decked with crepe. I've never seen such an outpouring of affection. I and other members of the staff got hundreds of letters. The Ambassador got thousands of letters. Oh, it was such an outpouring of affection, and I think we all felt absolutely stunned, shocked. I don't remember ever feeling quite so depressed. And then I got angrier. It annoyed me furiously, because this man had given such inspiration especially to the young. Well, that's it. Then, as you say, you arranged the Te Deum at Notre Dame.

Q: I still remember what Ambassador Bohlen said. They stopped the train at Nancy and the station master came on board and he said, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, j'ai une chose terrible et solenelle a vous annoncer."

LYON: Did Chip stay for the service, or did I attend?

Q: No, no, the Bohlens were there.

LYON: Two weeks before the assassination of the President I had received a telephone call from Frank Malloy, who had the French desk in Washington. He said, “You're being assigned as Ambassador to a post which is just your cup of tea.” I said, “Ceylon or China?” He said, “Ceylon.”

Q: You could have said India.

LYON: The autumn of '63 I was back in Washington preparing to go to Sri Lanka. Of course, we called it Ceylon in those days. It was still known as Ceylon, and I was anxious to get there, because, shortly thereafter, in November there'd be the election of a new U.S. president. And I wanted at least to get to my post before I had to send in my resignation, as all Ambassadors have to do as you know when a new president comes in. And then I was told that I had to take a course on espionage. Actually it was counter-espionage, and it had been started by Bobby Kennedy. It was interesting but it delayed me six weeks which didn't please me at that time. Rob McIlvaine was running it, and he was the nicest thing about it. They took people in that course on a trip; we traveled around; we went down to a naval base, and I went down in a submarine, which scared me to death. We went to Fort Bragg, I think it was, where they had a lot of simulated traps that the Vietnamese built to catch our soldiers—booby traps—and all sorts of things. It was very well done. In any event, I finally got to the point where I was to go abroad and I asked to see the President. I always think its useful, that we all should see the President before going off to new posts. And I was told that he was too busy, he couldn't possibly see me. So I regretted that, but suddenly a telephone call came saying, “Get over right away to the White House, the President will see you at six o'clock,” and it was then about 5:30.

Q: This was Johnson?

LYON: Yes, Johnson. I got over there at six o'clock and found that there were two other Ambassadors who were home from their posts and waiting to see him. We waited, and we waited, and we waited. Then in about an hour we were taken in and Johnson said,

“Let's have a photograph.” So we all had photographs with the President, and he said, “Ya'll doin' a fine job down there. Just keep on doing the fine job you're doing.” And I said, “Mr. President, I'd like to take a message from you to Madam Bandaranaike, or the High Commissioner, because Ceylon is still a British Colony.” He said, “Yeah, do that. Ya'll doin' a fine job down there. I'm proud of you, doin' a fine job.” I didn't dare tell him that I hadn't even been “down there” yet. We went off for Ceylon.

Q: Excuse me. When did it become independent? Was it while you were there?

LYON: Well, it was a Dominion while I was there, and it had a High Commissioner, and then it became fully independent about five years ago, as I recall. But I had to get my agr#ment from the Queen of England. She was still the Chief of State. I started off and all the briefings in the Department led me to believe that I was going to be enemy number one when I got there. The Prime Minister was Madam Bandaranaike, she was rather leftist in her ideas. Her Minister of Finance was a man called Doctor N. M. Pereira who'd studied under Harold Laski at the London School of Economics, the gentleman who was largely responsible for much of the breakup of the British Empire. And she had nationalized the oil companies, two American and one British. They didn't have oil in Ceylon but only distributors. All the oil was imported by those three companies. She'd nationalized those, therefore we had cut off aid, and then she had thrown out the Peace Corps. So I arrived with nice things to look forward to.

The first night we were there it was awfully hot, and Elsie and I were tired: we'd been meeting people, meeting the staff and everything. We decided after dinner to go and have a little walk on the beach. It was a beautiful moonlight night and we couldn't resist the temptation, we took off our clothes and plunged into the ocean. And we hadn't swum very far when we saw something coming towards us. And I said to Elsie, “What's that?” She said, “I think it looks like another person swimming, who's doing just the same as we are.” But as it got nearer, we noticed that it wasn't a human being, it was the biggest turtle

you've ever seen in your life coming towards us. The turtle was coming out to lay its eggs on the shore, and if it had taken one snap at us we'd have lost a leg. We scurried out.

I arrived, I think, on a Monday and I was received on a Thursday by the Governor General. The night before, we had a big reception for the whole staff, and Elsie and I went to bed, and just as we were turning off the lights I heard a squeak, a funny squeaking noise. I said, “Elsie, what on earth is that?” “Oh,” she said, “they tell me there are bandicoots in the roof and they make noises like that. They eat the insects and the snakes and things.” We had all sorts of snakes. We had cobras in the garden, amongst other things.

Q: A bandicoot is a sort of rodent, isn't it?

LYON: I think so, I don't know what a bandicoot is, but anyway she said it was that. We had our bedroom, then a dressing room and then a bathroom. I said, “Goodnight Mr. Bandicoot” and went to sleep, and I was suddenly awakened by a scream from Elsie. I hopped out of bed, and just then a naked man rushed right by my bed. I pursued him, and he ran out in the hall and started going down the stairs. I pursued him half way down, and then I suddenly realized that I too was naked, and I was scared that if he had a knife it would not be too pleasant, so I rushed back and I wrapped a sheet around me and I went downstairs. By that time he'd vanished but all the other servants kept coming in with baseball bats, and tennis rackets, and everything. We didn't find him. He'd already gone. The police came and they went upstairs. There was a big armoire in the dressing room, through which Elsie had gone with a flashlight. She didn't want to wake me, so she just took a flashlight, and the police opened the armoire door, and it made just the same squeak we heard before, which we thought was bandicoots. And I noticed that this fellow as he was going downstairs, limped a bit as he ran and scurried down the stairs. The next morning we were waiting on the terrace in front of the house to be taken off to present my credentials. And the Chief of Protocol drove up to pick us up in the car; a couple of cars for the whole staff. And I noticed that our footman, who went out to open the door of the

car, limped. We never could prove that it was the same man, but the police said he was probably a peeping tom.

Q: This was a footman from your own staff?

LYON: Yes, he was one of the Embassy servants. He was probably a peeping tom, and he hid in the closet. And just as he started to get out Elsie chose that moment to go through it with a flashlight so he scurried to get out of the way. We never really found out.My way had been paved for my going to Ceylon by Peter Ramsbottam, who had been a colleague of mine in Berlin and later was in the British Embassy in Paris. His father was called Lord Soulby; he had been Governor General of Ceylon. He had helped in making the treaty in which the colony became a dominion, etc., etc., and then they later had sent him out as Governor General. He was very nice and had given me a lot of good advice. When I presented my letters of credence to Gopallawa, who was the Governor General, at Queens House, which was a great manor thing left from the days the British ruled...

Q: He was Ceylonese then?

LYON: Gopallawa was Governor General. And we were led in first by all the servants. In those days they wore a sort of chignon at the back of their hair with a comb stuck in it—the male servants.

I was shocked because all our servants were barefooted; they were in very nice uniforms but in bare feet and I, of course, immediately got shoes for all of them because I didn't think the American Ambassador's servants should be barefooted, and they were all furious. Every time I was out of sight...

Q: It probably was sheer torture.

LYON: ...they'd take off their shoes.

We went into this vast building, the Queen's House, and we went upstairs and through numerous corridors, and we finally got to the ballroom. It was in the middle of the rainy season and all around the ballroom where I was to present my letters of credence to the Governor General, there were buckets—drip, drip, drip, with rain coming through the roof of Government House. Well, anyway, the Governor General couldn't have been nicer and he was very friendly. I said I was sorry the relations between our countries had reached such a pass, and what I wanted to do was straighten them out. He was very encouraging; he said, “Well you know these things happen, and I think we have more reasons to be friendly than not,” and all the usual things, but nicely done. He said, “Come and see me anytime you want.” So when I left there I decided perhaps the job wasn't going to be as difficult as I'd thought. Actually, I was rather pleased that there were some problems to settle if I had to go there.

I'd succeeded Frances Willis, who was a lady Ambassador, one of the first career lady Ambassadors. I was told again we thought it wise to send a lady Ambassador to a lady Prime Minister, but Madam Bandaranaike didn't like it at all. She thought it was almost patronizing.

The next day I called on the Prime Minister, Madam Bandaranaike. Temple Trees was the name of the residence where the Prime Minister lived. Her husband had been called Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike. He'd gone to Oxford and he'd been in the Oxford Union at the same time as Eden. He was a brilliant man but he was a bit left wing. He came of a very important Ceylonese family. They had their own hierarchies, but he was very interested in the poor and the poor workers. As I said, he was rather leftist, and he had changed many of the laws, trying to make the lot of the poor better. There'd been riots and finally he was assassinated. His wife was rushed in on a wave of tears, so to speak. In any event she was pretty cold to me; she was rather a handsome woman, and she was a little bit hefty; but she had a great deal of charm. I tried to explain that I wanted to try and get the oil matter settled, and she said, “You wouldn't have cut off aid to a more

powerful country, but Ceylon was a little country, you just took advantage of us, and if someone else had done, it you wouldn't have cut off the aid." I had to say to myself, "I think maybe she has a point." Because I know we were scared of the same thing happening in India. We thought if they got away with it in Ceylon, the Indians might do the same sort of thing. But I said the usual diplomatic things; let's forget about the past and think only of the future.

After that I left and I was rather encouraged and we immediately got to work, trying to settle the oil matter. I thought it would be a great thing if we could settle such a claim against a very leftist government. I thought it would have a good effect around the world, and I went to see Pereira and he said he certainly wanted to settle the thing. But they put such a high fee—our oil companies had put such a high fee on compensation which they wanted for the nationalization that we were miles apart. But we kept working on it, and working on it, and eventually it did work out but I won't go into that. Incidentally, Pereira was head of the Trotsky Party, one of the only ones still in existence.

Q: They did settle?

LYON: We got it, but not from that government unfortunately. I would have preferred it if we'd been able to do it with a very leftist government.

The second day we were there, I was sitting in my office and Elsie came in, looked around and said, "My, you've come down in the world, haven't you?" After the glorious office I'd had in Paris, looking out on the Place de la Concorde. I said, "Well, I'm told that when Frances Willis was here, and it rained, she used to have to sit under an umbrella because the roof leaked so badly."

Q: Tell me, was the Tamil-Singhalese trouble already boiling up?

LYON: We had some riots.

Q: But in Colombo there aren't many Tamils, are there, or am I mistaken?

LYON: Well, the Tamils are about 20% of the population. Most of them are in the north around Jaffna, of course.

Q: That's what I mean, yes.

LYON: But there also quite a number of Tamils in Colombo too, some even in the Government.

Q: There were outbursts when you were there?

LYON: They'd already started, and in that connection I would say they couldn't have a better president at the present moment than Jayawardene, who became president later. He was Deputy Prime Minister when I was there.

Q: You knew him well then?

LYON: Oh, I knew him well. And after Madam Bandaranaike's government fell—oh, I should tell how the government fell. They'd had terrible storms, lashing the country, and she called me up in desperation, and said, “Couldn't I get help sent in?” And I tried to, because I thought, you know, anything we can do to get this lady to come around. And we did send some help but while the storm was lashing the country, Madam Bandaranaike's government fell, and it fell by one vote. It's rather interesting: she said that I brought down the government—I naturally would have, if I could have but I don't think I did. But I may have helped because a few weeks before that, the USIA had received a film called “Years of Lightning, Days of Drums”—did you ever see it? Its a documentary about Kennedy and Kennedy's life, and, all through it, they played the funeral march and the funeral went along. It showed how Kennedy went to Berlin, said, “Ich bin ein Berliner,” and he made a lot of speeches. It was a marvelous documentary, and I wanted to show it in all the movie theaters in Ceylon. The government said I couldn't, because they thought it was too

disagreeable for their good friends the Russians and the Chinese; they were very friendly with our so-called enemies in those days.

Q: Why would it be disagreeable for them?

LYON: Because it was very pro-democracy and pro-West.

Q: Oh, I see. Surely, there was no attempt to tie the Russians or the Chinese into the assassination?

LYON: Oh, no, no. Mrs. Bandaranaike just didn't want to do anything that might offend them because they were very friendly.

Q: The Cubans might have been irritated.

LYON: Well everybody who was not too democratic, and not too pro-U.S.

Q: No, I was thinking of the conspiracy theories.

LYON: Anyway, they wouldn't let me show it at any of the theaters, so I invited any number of people to the residence, and we had several showings. And then I took it all over the country. I'd go to a town and I'd get a local golf club or whatever it was, to allow me to have a room. I'd hire a room, and I'd invite all the leaders of the community to come and see it. I did it all over Ceylon. I was traveling around madly with this film, showing it everywhere. Then a picture came out in the press after one of our receptions where we had the film; the photo showed me and a Member of Parliament, C.P. DeSilva. But he was the one man who crossed over from her party to the other side and brought down her government. It fell by one vote. And that M.P. was photographed with me coming out of the reception...so she was convinced that I had put up the whole thing.

They were very clever, the conservative party. Some of the leftist Deputies were traveling in Europe and they were about to come back, just before the vote. The conservatives

knew when this vote was coming up. The conservatives said, “Why don't you go down to the south of France? Its perfectly lovely, you ought to see it.” “Well, we don't have any money.” “Oh, we'll give you the money.” So they got four votes to disappear, not to be back to support the government.Anyway, the government fell, and in came Dudley Senanayake, who was the head of the conservative party. And he was a nice, slow-going individual. He was astute but he was rather like a great many people in that country: a little tired because of the heat. But this very bright Jayawardene, who is now the president was his Deputy Prime Minister. Whenever I had any difficult problems I would get hold of him, or go to see him, when I could, politely, without giving offence to the Prime Minister. We got lawyers down from the States, and after a couple of months of negotiations we settled the oil thing.

Q: That was while you were still there?

LYON: That was while I was there. Then I also succeeded in getting the Peace Corps to come back. So everything went very well, and then between you and me and the lamppost, things got a bit boring.

Q: Tell me, what were the relations between New Delhi and Colombo at this period?

LYON: They were perfectly friendly. You had Indira Gandhi who was a lady Prime Minister and Madam Bandaranaike...

Q: I was thinking more of the present situation, where the Indians have gotten themselves into a terrible mess there.

LYON: Oh now, yes, but at that time it was perfectly friendly. I think the Ceylonese have always been afraid of India, I mean that they might be eventually taken over by India. And when I read about Indian troops coming in to try and quell the difficulties between the Tamils and the Ceylonese, and the Buddhists lately, I thought, “Aha, this is sort of the foot in the door. I think it's rather dangerous.” But it seems to be going all right.

Q: Well the leadership, of course, is still Singhalese, isn't it? So it's Tamils versus Singhalese.

LYON: I say Ceylonese because that's the way the British pronounce it. It's really Tamils versus Buddhists.

Q: Tamils are not Ceylonese, are they?

LYON: Yes, but they're not Buddhists. I would call all inhabitants of Ceylon, or Sri Lanka, Ceylonese or Singhalese, to be correct. I would have to go to Buddhist ceremonies a great deal. It's sweltering hot; you sit there and, of course, you don't understand a word they're saying.

Q: What's the religion of the Tamils? They're a fairly primitive people, the Tamils, aren't they?

LYON: No, they're about the same. They go to the same schools...and they used to have Tamil people in the Parliament. The Tamils are mostly Hindu, and they have their own language.

As I say, we got the oil thing settled, and the Peace Corps coming back. I don't think AID had started before I left.

The Maldive Islands became independent from the British, and I used to say to people with my tongue in my cheek, “The President again has shown his great confidence in me. He's made me Ambassador to the Maldives concurrently.” And people would say, “The what? The where?” Nobody knew what it was. Then I thought I should go over and present my credentials to the Sultan.

Q: There aren't very many people on those islands, are there?

LYON: No, but there are 300 islands and they're spread all over the place. It's a terrible place to get to, there was no easy way to get there. They didn't then have an airfield and the only way to get there was by boat, but there weren't any passenger boats. So the U.S. Government said they'd send a destroyer to take me. The Ceylonese government would not allow any of our ships to come in unless we declared that they did not carry atomic weapons. We couldn't do that because, it would show which ones did and which ones didn't, it would give the whole thing away. Although the government had changed, and it was already the conservative government, the other government had put this regulation through.

Q: But where would the destroyers be coming from?

LYON: Our South Asian base.

Q: In the islands?

LYON: Oh, no, no. I mean it would have come to pick me up in Ceylon. But as we couldn't do that, the only way I could get there was to go on a boat that carried fish. The Maldive Islands' sole economy is dried fish, which they send to India and the Indians use in their curry. The boat touches at Colombo on its way to Madras or wherever, Bombay. Well anyway, Jack Eaves, who was on the staff, and I set off on the Maldive Star. The captain very kindly vacated his cabin for me. The cabin was hardly big enough for me to get in, and I shared it with a man called Gromov, who was the Russian head of the United Nations operation in Ceylon. He was going over for the first time to see what the UN should be doing in the Maldives now that it had become independent. Gromov weighed a couple of hundred pounds, and he was really delightful. It's one of those situations where you wish that the Russians were on our side. You're not allowed to have anything to drink in the Maldive Islands because it's Moslem, but being a diplomat I was allowed to take alcohol. Anyway Gromov made such inroads on my supply of alcohol that one day I said, “Oh, Gromov you're nothing but a capitalist.” “That's Peking propaganda. Why

you say that." I said, "Well, you like liquor, you like fast cars, and fast women." "Peking propaganda." And when we arrived in the Maldive Islands—and Male is the name of the capital...

Q: That's interesting. He was referring openly to the rift between the Soviets and the Chinese then?

LYON: Yes. We got there and he was lodged in the same guest house with us. It was three or four days before I could present my credentials to the Sultan. We got there on some religious holiday, and that was delayed, so I asked if we couldn't go swimming because the water is crystal clear, the coral perfectly beautiful.

I should say the cabin on the boat had been shared not only by me and Gromov, but all sorts of bedbugs. And poor old Eaves didn't fare quite as well as I did. He was down where there were many people. Finally in desperation he slept on the deck, it was so crowded below, and awful. Well anyway, Eaves, and Gromov and I used to go swimming every morning, and Gromov was always snapping out a camera to take pictures of me. I said, "Come on, Gromov, you don't have to take pictures of me to send to Moscow. They've got thousands of me that they took when I was in Warsaw and Berlin." "Peking propaganda." He was wonderful.

I presented my credentials to the Sultan. For a man who'd lived in such a remote place, I found him very much up on things. He dressed in an amusing way. He wore a little kepi on his head, with a crescent—which is an emblem of the Maldive Islands—made of diamonds, and three feathers like the Prince of Wales. And then he had on a sash across his chest. But he was really very well informed, and he was very pleased that we were recognizing his country. I'm sure he felt aid was going to start to flow immediately.

Eaves and I spent a couple of days there. It was very interesting. On almost every corner there was a mosque. The British were building a huge hospital with about, I think, 130 beds, something like that. But what they were going to use for doctors nobody knew, there

were no doctors there. The country didn't even have a bank, and as I say, their only export was fish. I envisaged that, one day, it might be a wonderful tourist place because its so lovely, but they have to build some hotels or something.

Q: And an airport.

LYON: Well, they were building the airport while we were there. It wasn't built when I was to go there, but it was finished while we were there, and we came back on the first flight.

Q: You must have been there quite a while then?

LYON: I was only there three or four days but actually the airport was almost finished, when we started, but not quite. And they didn't have any regular flights then. That was just to bring back the Prime Minister, who had been ill over in his Ceylon home. As I say, Eaves and I flew back on the first flight and the next time I went—I only went twice—Mike Callingart went with me and this time we did go on a destroyer. And I'd asked the Department if they wouldn't give them a boat. I told them about the atolls, and how its very difficult for them to get around. The Sultan tried to visit all the islands but even he hadn't visited them all—and I thought a landing craft like we used to use in the war would be most useful. But no, they couldn't think of giving me one of those to present to them. I ended up taking them a whaling boat.

Q: What do you mean, they didn't even have an old LST lying around somewhere?

LYON: I would have thought they had, but they weren't that interested in Ceylon or the Maldives. I did take them a whaling boat on my second journey, and that was humiliating. Everybody came out, I was to make this grand presentation to the Prime Minister. And the sailors from the destroyer came in the boat; they dragged the boat close to the shore—towed it in—and then they started in “grr-grr”, and they couldn't get the damned motor to go. It was terribly embarrassing.

It was rather a sad trip for me also because when I arrived, the first morning, we anchored in the harbor, and I was handed a telegram from the Secretary of State, saying, “Please request the agr#ment of Mr. Andrew Corry as Ambassador to Ceylon and the Maldive Islands.” I turned to Callingart, “What do you suppose?” and he couldn't make out. I said, “Isn't this funny. When I was home I was given the impression that everything was going well, and I would be staying there.” I was rather hoping I would be sent one other place before I had to retire, which would have been about a year and a half ahead. But that didn't work out, so that ended my career as a Foreign Service Officer. I went home via Australia and New Zealand. I found it fascinating, and I found Australia interesting—the north of Australia particularly so.

When I got home the Secretary said, “Cecil, I'm sorry this had to happen.” I said, “Well, I understand.” I'd found out that it was because Mansfield wanted his friend appointed, Andrew Corry. And I said, “I'm going out to Perth and make a fortune.” “No, no,” said the Secretary, “there are still lots of things I want you to do.” But every time I'd ask the Chief of Personnel, or anyone, it was, “Well, we haven't anything just now. And you're very lucky. You've had two Embassies, a lot of Foreign Service Officers aren't lucky.” I suppose I was, but still its a little bit...

Q: It sounds like a theatrical casting agency, doesn't it? Sorry, nothing this week.

LYON: I think we won't go into the time of the Inspection Corps. I didn't like it, and I'd never wanted it.

I could go on and on but I fear I've already talked too much. As General Mathewson used to say, “We all talk too damn much.” But I would just like to mention two incidents I recall with pleasure.

The first was after President Kennedy took over and we were trying to straighten out the mess in Laos. You will recall that. It was in your bailiwick.

Averell Harriman asked me to go and see Souvanna Phouma, who was living in Paris, and to try and persuade him to return to Laos and take over.

I went on May 1st. Midinettes were selling muguets on the streets. I bought a little bunch and handed it to Souvanna when he greeted me in his apartment.

I said, “Ca porte bonheur pour notre discussion.”

He seemed pleased—and he did go back to Laos.

The second incident is a tribute to the Foreign Service.

You probably remember that, when Dulles became Secretary, he called us all together and emphasized “positive loyalty”, no doubt fearing quite wrongly that if we were loyal to Acheson we probably would not be to him.

Some years later I was attending one of Dulles' staff meetings and was delighted to hear him say we have a fine Foreign Service. “Whenever I have something important to be done I turn to a Foreign Service Officer.”

So be it.

John you've been most patient and tolerant. Thank you.

End of interview